

## UNMASKING MORETTO

FADE IN:

CREDITS BEGIN

CLOSE ON:

An artist's canvas which reveals a young girl in a red dress standing in a meadow of poppies. She looks sad, sedate. A paintbrush sweeps above her, darkening the blue sky. It sweeps by several more times, giving a feeling of dusk to the beautiful, somber scene.

INT. STEFANO'S LOFT - DAY

The artist, STEFANO DiPRESSO, stands above his work with brush in hand. On his palate he mixes blue with more black and meticulously returns to the Spanish sky of the painting. DiPresso is in his early fifties, with an angular face and Italian jowls, which make him look much older than his age. His every move resonates the touch of a perfectionist. The studio is filled with paintings - still-lives, abstracts, and watercolors. A simple sofa rests against the east wall and a dining table stands nearby. Stefano takes a step back from his work and studies it with an anxious eye. The slot on the front door creaks, and a small pile of mail falls through. Stefano sets down his brush for a moment and collects the pile. He sorts through it quickly, and then stops. His face becomes a collage of disgust and anger.

CLOSE ON:

the cover of San Francisco magazine, all in green, with a huge red question mark stretching from top to bottom. In white block letters, it reads WHO IS MORETTO.

Stefano hurls the magazine at the dining table, and it slides neatly across, scattering to the floor at the other end. He sets down the rest of the mail, and returns to the easel. He is immediately absorbed again in his work, plying the smallest, simplest strokes with the care of a first-time heart surgeon.

A loud KNOCK comes from the front door.

Stefano turns around, and only stares at the door, annoyed at the disturbance. He gives a long, angry scowl and then returns to the canvas.

The door opens behind Stefano and LUCIO enters. Lucio is slightly older than Stefano, slightly overweight, but well-dressed and attractive. The language of both men retains a sharp taste of their native Italian. Lucio is carrying a picnic basket with a loaf of bread poking out the top.

LUCIO

What, you don't answer the door no more?

STEFANO

If you're only going to come in anyhow, why should I answer the door?

Lucio sets the basket on the table and joins Stefano.

LUCIO  
She is looking beautiful. You've been working on her, eh?

STEFANO  
(never looking at him)  
What does it look like? Have I been working on her!

LUCIO  
What do you call her?

STEFANO  
It has two names.

LUCIO  
Two names? Since when do paintings have two names?

STEFANO  
It is called Andalusian Eyes.

LUCIO  
Andalusian Eyes? Like the south of Spain? What do you know about Spain? What's the other name?

STEFANO  
And Illusion Dies.

LUCIO  
It's beautiful, Stefano. It will be in a gallery soon. I feel certain.

Stefano grabs Lucio's face and kisses both cheeks.

STEFANO  
I want it hanging in somebody's private collection. I need it to sell, amico.

LUCIO  
Gabriella sent me with food. I have melanzane, ravioli, and bread. Have a break and eat with me.

Stefano sets down his brush.

STEFANO  
Va bene. Mangiamo.

LATER

Lucio and Stefano sit over devoured plates of tiramisu and glasses of red wine. The TV is on behind them. A news broadcast can be heard.

STEFANO

You thank Gabriella for me. She is a good friend.

LUCIO

She says the secret behind every great artist is good food. Michaelangelo his manicotti, Picasso his paella, Van Gogh his veal cutlet, and DiPresso his dessert.

STEFANO

(taking a final bite)

She might be right. Might be right.

LUCIO

Why do you not paint Italy anymore? Your villages in Italy, those are my favorites.

STEFANO

I tell you. I can still see the green hills of Umbria where I grew up, and my mother, but it's all lost its lustre. I cannot paint what I cannot see.

Lucio's eyes suddenly go wide, and he almost falls out of his chair trying to nab the TV remote control.

LUCIO

The news is so boring. Let's find something else on TV.

But, it's too late, as Stefano gives his full attention to the screen:

CLOSE ON -

the TV. A newsreporter, MANNY MARTINEZ, is on a busy San Francisco street in front of an art gallery.

MANNY

Our search through the San Francisco art world continues. Who is Moretto? That is the question on everybody's lips. But the answer seems as perplexing as some of the art itself.

Stefano stabs at the remote control and the screens drones to black.

STEFANO

Moretto, Moretto! Who cares who is Moretto? There are other artists!

Lucio squirms in his seat, his eyes roam the room, looking for something to say. He has heard this rant before. There is a long silence, Lucio squirming, Stefano fuming.

LUCIO

When will you take out the new painting? The Spanish girl.

STEFANO

And-a-loooo-sian Eyes. Tomorrow.

LUCIO  
I will help you.

STEFANO  
You're a good friend.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARINA DISTRICT - DAY

Young joggers move swiftly along the oceanside boardwalk. Sailboats and catamarans dot the sunny San Francisco coast. Lucio, in a nice suit, and Stefano, in a silk shirt and black pants, look largely out of place. Each is carrying a large portfolio-sized package.

LUCIO  
Where do we go first?

STEFANO  
The LeMan.

LUCIO  
(with disdain)  
Aaaaaaacchhh!

STEFANO  
What? What is it?

LUCIO  
They're no good to you there.

STEFANO  
They owe me. They still owe me something.

Lucio only looks off toward the ocean, disbelieving.

INT. THE LEMAN GALLERY

A tasteful art parlor with walls sponged faux. A number of vibrant, richly colorful abstracts line the wall as they enter. A huge banner is raised above them which reads - MORETTO - THE NEW WORKS. A number of patrons stand admiring the works. Stefano and Lucio enter. Stefano looks disdain-fully at the display.

STEFANO  
More rubbish. More rubbish every week.

LUCIO  
He doesn't have-a half your talent, that Moretto.

STEFANO  
Half of my talent? He has no talent. No talent at all.

A youngish looking man walks their way. ROBERT, 22, is in suit and tie with wire-rimmed glasses.

ROBERT  
Can I help you gentlemen?

STEFANO  
I am here to see Carmine.

ROBERT  
Oh, I'm sorry. Carmine took a job in New York last month. Is there anything I can help you with?

STEFANO  
Who are you?

ROBERT  
Name's Robert Shaw. I'm the assistant gallery manager.

LUCIO  
This is Stefano DiPresso. Without him there would be no Leman Gallery.

STEFANO  
What brings you here, Robert? Are you an artist?

ROBERT  
Aaah, no. I'm still a student, actually.

STEFANO  
A student? Studying what? Art history?

ROBERT  
No, sir. I'm a business major.

STEFANO  
Business, hmmm. Well, I tell you, I used to bring my paintings to Carmine, and she would give them a cozy place on the showroom, you understand?

ROBERT  
I'm sorry. Your name again?

STEFANO  
Stefano DiPresso. Mine was one of the first big shows the Leman ever had.

ROBERT  
First shows? You mean twelve years ago?

LUCIO  
Have a look at this.

Lucio begins unzipping the leather cover he has been carrying. Inside is the painting of the girl in red.

LUCIO

This is beautiful, eh? Should be a centerpiece.

ROBERT

Are you his agent?

STEFANO

Agent? I am an artist. I am not a clown.

ROBERT

It...it's very beautiful, Mr. DiPresso. But, I'm sorry, we're very full right now. And next week we are expanding the Moretto display. If you'll give me your number, I'll pass it along to Mrs. Yates.

STEFANO

You are expanding the Moretto display? With new paintings?

ROBERT

That's how I understand it, sir.

STEFANO

What does he do, paint something new every day? Do you think that's art, Robert? A painting a day?

ROBERT

We've been getting close to six hundred people a day in to look at it, sir.

STEFANO

They come because he is a mystery. It has nothing to do with art. If it was known who is this Moretto, you would not get ten people a day.

ROBERT

That may be true, sir. It's certainly a clever ploy. I'm sorry. I really need to get back to.....

STEFANO

Let me explain something to you, Robert. On the canvas of all great art lies some hidden meaning. Since Moretto is not capable of great art, he has instead hidden himself.

LUCIO

(holding up Stefano's painting)

This is greatness.

Robert only smirks and shrugs.

EXT. FRANKLIN STREET

A cable car runs up the hill where Lucio and Stefano trudge with their bundles in hand. They move toward a large canopy which reads HANSON GALLERY.

INT. HANSON GALLERY

Much bigger than the LeMan and more elaborate. Wooden floors and fancy wooden alcoves for the prized paintings. There are far fewer paintings in a much larger space. DOLORES REYES, a dark, attractive woman in her late forties is dusting. A young couple is browsing the paintings in back. Lucio and Stefano enter with portfolios in hand.

DOLORES  
Stefano, Lucio. Hello. How are you?

Stefano moves to Dolores and they exchange cheek-chafing ciaos.

STEFANO  
Dolores. It is always wonderful to see you. I want to ask....

DOLORES  
Stefano, I know why you are here. I'm sorry. We cannot display any more of your work. We still have your last two portraits hanging in the back.

Dolores leads the two of them to the back corner where two very dark portraits hang.

DOLORES  
The market is very bad right now.

STEFANO  
Unless your name is Moretto, eh?

DOLORES  
We've discussed this before, Stefano. I love your work. You know that. (pause) I'd love to see it.

LUCIO  
Yes, yes. You must see it. I think that will change your mind.

Lucio again unzips the portfolio and bares the precious painting.

LUCIO  
You see. It is sure to sell. It's beautiful.

DOLORES  
It is beautiful, Stefano. Maybe one of the smaller galleries has room for it. You have been a prized...

STEFANO  
(suddenly screaming)  
Once, every painting on that entire wall was one of mine. And this, this I bring you is even

better. I am getting better as an artist, and  
you are wasting your time with amateurs!!!

The young couple quickly scurries out at this outburst.

DOLORES

The times changed, Stefano. You can't blame me  
for that.

INT. BLAKEMORE GALLERY

Another cozier art den. Thick colors are splashed across not only the  
canvasses that line the walls, but across the walls themselves. Tables  
are set up and a young, chic clientele sips on coffee and nibbles at  
croissants. Stefano and Lucio are in the back with Marguerite. She is  
French, lithe and opinionated. Lucio is displaying the new painting.

STEFANO

Stefano DiPresso. The name meant something here  
once.

MARGUERITE

Yes, you are right. It meant something once. But  
that is worse than if it never meant anything.  
You can only be a virgin once, Stefano. This,  
this that you paint, it is not what people want  
anymore.

EXT. BROWN ST. - NIGHT

Dusk is settling in on the two weary travelers as they amble slowly  
along the street. Both look tired and sad.

LUCIO

Tomorrow. Tomorrow we try again.

Before he can respond, Stefano's eyes shoot open and he stares ahead.  
Abandoning Lucio, and mindless of traffic, he darts across the street  
and almost runs toward a pawn shop, portfolio still in hand.

LUCIO

Stefano, what are you doing?

EXT. PALMER'S PAWN SHOP

A gray and musty building where family mementos and keepsakes are  
probably pawned. The window is spray-painted with red "Buy and Sell  
Cheap." Lucio hurries to where Stefano is perched, staring at the window  
and...

CLOSE ON:

a painting. An Italian village, with streets of cobbled stones, and old  
men in conversation. Children in long pants chase each other through the  
center of town, and shadows from two-story buildings fall on two young  
lovers who kiss.

LUCIO

Stefano, what are you doing?



STEFANO

Look! Look!

LUCIO

That.... oh dear.

STEFANO

(anguished)

Luglio a Locarno. It was once purchased for thousands of dollars. It was the prize of my second show. It is a disgrace that it is here.

LUCIO

There must be a mistake, Stefano. Somebody must not have realized.

STEFANO

Realized? Realized what? Look at it. It is everything that I remember about Italy. Everything. Look at it. HERE!

Stefano sets down his portfolio, grabs his head in his hands and simply walks away. Lucio picks up the abandoned bag, but it is quite a struggle to carry them both. He attempts to chase Stefano, but cannot move as quickly as the smaller man with both bags in his arms.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stefano sits in the corner between two knocked-over paint-ings. He sips from a bottle of wine. Lucio enters out of breath, and almost collapses from the weight of both the painting and its easel.

LUCIO

Stefano, what are you doing?

STEFANO

I am finishing our wine. Go. Go home. Go back to your wife.

LUCIO

Stefano, we will go back out tomorrow. We'll go up to North Beach.

STEFANO

NO! No! It will be more of the same. If the painting does not have a big M on it, they do not want it.

LUCIO

Have you ever thought of it, Stefano? Have you ever thought of painting under a different name? You could become as big a mystery as Moretto himself.

Stefano rises at this, fire in his eyes.

STEFANO

(angry, passionate)

I don't want to be a mystery!! I want to be Stefano DiPresso again. I want people to love my art because it is mine, not because it is a mystery!!

LUCIO

People are stupid, Stefano. They do not recognize genius. Gabriella and I - we think you are a genius.

STEFANO

It's that damned Moretto. Flooding the galleries, lowering the standards of art all over the city. If I knew who he was - if I knew who he was, I would kill him dead.

LUCIO

You're talking crazy. You are a genius. It is only a matter of time. Perhaps you can take that job at the art school until you sell a couple of pieces.

STEFANO

I am not talking crazy!! It was a mistake to have you with me today. Saying stupid things and begging them to take my painting. You made me look desperate!!

LUCIO

(resentful)

Listen to you. You blame this Moretto. You blame me. Always somebody else to blame with you, Stefano. But never Stefano. Why don't you paint Italy anymore?

STEFANO

(exploding)

GET OUT!! YOU ARE AN IDIOT!! I am still genius!

Lucio has a seat in a chair at the dining table.

LUCIO

I am not leaving until you stop talking crazy.

Stefano grits his teeth and fumes for a moment, then rushes past Lucio toward the door.

LUCIO

Where are you going?

STEFANO

To find Moretto.

LUCIO

To find him? How? What for?

STEFANO

To kill him.

Stefano slams the door behind him. Lucio sits, stunned.

EXT. PALMER'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

Stefano is standing at the window, staring at *Luglio a Locarno*. Passersby weave around him in the sidewalk and he seems oblivious. Finally, he turns and enters the store.

INT. PALMER'S PAWN SHOP

The store is crammed with goods, from the worthless to the abandoned. Watches, wallets, paintings, jewelry, exercise equipment, cameras, clothes, you name it. A seedy looking MANAGER sits lethargically behind the counter.

MANAGER

You in the market for that painting up front? I seen you eyeing it. I can cut you a deal. Rare piece really.

STEFANO

No. I am not here for the painting. I am here for something else.

INT. BARTELLI FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Lucio and his wife GABRIELLA, a round-faced, confident woman in her late 40s, are seated at the dining table. The room is simple, with a coffee table, bookshelves, and a small TV. A huge painting of an Italian village hangs on the wall behind the table.

GABRIELLA

So, you didn't even go after him? He threatens to kill a man, and you just let him go?

LUCIO

He's no killer. You didn't spend all day with him. He'll drive you crazy.

GABRIELLA

He's no killer? He's an artist. He IS crazy. You know he's crazy, and you don't help him?

LUCIO

Help him? I'm just glad it's this Moretto he is going to kill and not me.

Gabriella begins violently doing the Sign of the Cross across her chest.

GABRIELLA

If it weren't for the men in my life, I would know peace on this earth. You just as bad as he is. You both a couple of killers. Why don't you just kill me?

LUCIO

You want to help him? Why don't you go over there and try to help and maybe he WILL kill you. And then you'll see. He's crazy.

Gabriella continues doing the Sign of the Cross, and finishes it off by giving Lucio "the finger".

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT

Stefano is seated at the dining room table, with the San Francisco Chronicle spread out before him. On the table next to him rests a brown paper bag. He is reading through the Datebook section of the Chronicle in the Art section. A huge ad reads, "Hanspard Galleries presents The Moretto Collection." Stefano grabs a paint brush and circles this ad with the tip. He sets the newspaper down and picks up the paper bag. From it, he removes a handgun, shiny and silver. He lifts the bag up and six bullets fall into his palm. He opens the chamber of the gun and begins placing the bullets in, but a loud KNOCK sounds on the door. He scrambles to put the gun back in the bag.

STEFANO

Chi e? Chi e?

Stefano moves to the door and opens it slightly. As soon as he does, it flies open just missing his nose. Gabriella bursts through the door.

GABRIELLA

I am glad you are here, Stefano. Lucio, he tells me you will not be here. He tells me you will be out killing somebody.

Stefano reluctantly shuts the door behind him.

STEFANO

It is good to see you, Gabriella. I am not out killing anybody.

GABRIELLA

Good. Good. You are talking sense again.

STEFANO

But I am going to kill him soon.

GABRIELLA

Crazy man! You are going to kill who? This Moretto? You do not even know who he is.

STEFANO

I'm going to find out.

GABRIELLA

You're going to kill a man you don't even know? You crazy! Why are you suddenly a killer? This Moretto did what to you?

STEFANO

If not for Moretto, I would still be famous. I would still be able to do shows in any gallery I choose.

Gabriella, looking exhausted, takes a seat at the dining table. The paper bag is just next to her, and Stefano eyes her nervously.

GABRIELLA

You are not a killer. Without me, you would not even be able to feed yourself. What is this here? What do you buy to feed yourself?

Stefano lunges for the paper bag, but Gabriella seizes it first. She opens it and lets out a huge GASP. With fitful breathing she begins another flurry of Sign of the Cross.

GABRIELLA

Oh, mio Dio. Dio, Dio, Dio! You a killer now? Huh?

Stefano grabs the bag away from her and tucks it into his jacket.

STEFANO

You don't understand, Gabriella. This man - he has ruined the lives of hundreds of talented artists.

GABRIELLA

This man! Lucio tells me you just painted a Spanish girl in a field in Spain. What you know about Spain? What you know about girls in fields?

STEFANO

I have studied the culture of Spain. I have seen many pictures.

GABRIELLA

You've seen pictures! You didn't used to paint from pictures, Stefano. You used to paint from everywhere inside. You want to be loved again? Why don't you paint from the heart and quit killing people!

Stefano turns his back on her and stares out the window.

STEFANO

Did Lucio send you here?

GABRIELLA

Yes, Lucio - he sent me here. You know, Lucio - he has-a three brothers. I have never seen him spend a whole day with any of them. But you, oh, he's always willing to spend the whole day with you.

STEFANO

I'm sorry that you cannot understand. This man has disgraced me.

GABRIELLA

You are the one who does not understand.

Gabriella takes a covered bowl from her purse.

GABRIELLA

This - this I brought for you. But I tell you right now - you kill anybody, I don't bring no more food. You are a stubborn man.

Gabriella walks up behind him and kisses him on the cheek.

CUT TO:

INT. STRAVALI CAFE

A small, artsy coffeehouse peopled with a crowd of every race and persuasion imaginable. Stefano sits at a table, reading through a magazine. STAN BELLOWS, 40s, with close-cropped hair, John Lennon glasses, and red suspenders, enters and takes a seat across from Stefano.

STAN

Stefano, good to see you. It's been a long time.

STEFANO

Too long. Are you .. how is your painting?

STAN

Aaaah, I'm mostly into sculpture these days. Sold a few pieces last weekend.

STEFANO

That is good. Good to hear. I... I am still painting, and nobody will take my work. Moretto, Moretto, Moretto. Every gallery you go in, it's only Moretto they want. Or the "next" Moretto. What do you know of this Moretto?

STAN

What does anybody know, right? I heard a theory that Moretto is really just a big company that mass-produces paintings, and they're running us all out of business.

STEFANO

Do you think that's possible?

STAN

Naaah, stuff's too good. Too unique.

STEFANO

I want to find this Moretto. Doesn't it make you mad?

STAN

It's kind of ironic, isn't it? Moretto's the one who's invisible, but you and I are the ones who disappeared.

STEFANO

How do I find him?

STAN

Well, he must be a San Franciscan. At least he sure promotes the local galleries. You're in the right place. What do you want with Moretto?

STEFANO

I.... I just want to expose him. I think if we can expose him, we can ruin him.

STAN

I doubt it, Stefano. It would probably only make him more famous.

STEFANO

I'm going to find him. What do you think I should do?

STAN

What about his shows? He's got a couple of openings coming up. He may be a mystery, but he's still an artist. He's got to have an ego like the rest of us.

STEFANO

You mean you think he attends his own openings?

STAN

Most exciting nights of an artist's life, right? I'd be willing to bet on it.

INT. LAROCHE'S LOFT

LAURENT LAROCHE is an eccentric artist in his 40s. His small loft is dark - the only light that illuminates it comes from countless paintings that look like they were merely splashed with paint. They range in size from small to huge, representing every color in the rainbow. A wobbly card table and a dirty couch are the only other furniture. LaRouche is dressed in leather pants and a stained T-shirt. He is sitting at the card table across from Stefano. LaRouche looks frazzled.

LAROCHE

It is no use, my friend. It is the greatest conspiracy of our day. You cannot find him because they make sure he's not going to be found.

STEFANO

They? Who is they?

LAROCHE

The government. They can't ban art. They can't censor artists. So, instead they just cut back our funding and support Moretto - thus destroying us.

STEFANO

Well, I'm going to find him.

LAROUCHE

And what are you going to do?

Stefano pauses for a moment, not sure whether or not to say.

STEFANO

(in a whisper)

I'm going to kill him.

LAROUCHE

Ooooh, ohh. I doubt that. The FBI - they will kill you before you get near him. Be careful who you talk to, Stefano. I had a friend, Simon Berlitz, who tried to find out about Moretto. Next thing I knew he just disappeared. Poof. Disappeared without a trace.

STEFANO

(suddenly irritated)

I know Simon Berlitz! He moved back to Germany! He did not disappear!

LAROUCHE

That's probably what they tell you. What they want you to believe. If he is in Germany, tell me this - how come he never writes me? Huh?

LaRouche gives Stefano a look that suggests he has just solved the unsolvable, and Stefano merely sighs.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

The park is alive with sunshine and young laughter. Frisbees fly, birds feed, and lovers hold hands. Stefano is seated next to VICTOR BUSTAMANTE, a proud Italian in his late 70s. Unlike Stefano, Victor retains very little of his Italian dialect. He has a bag of bread that he is tossing to the pigeons.

VICTOR

Amelia Airhart they never found. Jimmy Hoffa - never found him. Some people are never going to be found. Some people were not meant to be found. Hai capito?

STEFANO

You have been teaching art for forty years in this city. You know every artist, every piece of work. You must know something.

VICTOR

The only man who ever knew anything was Paul Hatcher. For the first two years of Moretto's career, all the paintings were shown in Hatcher's gallery. Made both of them very rich. And Hatcher would not tell anybody anything. When he died of a heart attack, Moretto's work made it to new galleries, but from what I



understand, the money now goes to charity, so it can never be traced back to anyone.

STEFANO

Well, there must be something I can do?

VICTOR

Smarter men than you and me have tried to find Moretto. The reporters, critics, all of 'em. And none of them learned anything.

STEFANO

How is this possible? There must be many people that know the secret.

VICTOR

Maybe so, maybe not. I can tell you this. If you want to learn anything about any artist, it does not matter who he knows, what galleries he visits, none of that. You want to learn about the artist - you have to look inside the art.

INT. LEMAN GALLERY - DAY

The LeMan is slightly less crowded than it had been previously. Stefano joins a few others who are admiring the Moretto display. Stefano stops at the first painting - a small canvas sporting a square outlined in one half with a dark blue and on the other half with a bright red. Where they converge, there are splashes of purple, and inside the box a circle of blood red. At the bottom is a small, yellow M.

Stefano moves on to the next painting. Again, a smattering of paint, this time in violent swirls that seem to curve from one end of the canvas to the next in black and green. At the top of the painting are two yellow dots that shine out from the black that surrounds them. Again, a huge M at the bottom. An ELDERLY MAN AND WOMAN join Stefano in admiring the work.

ELDERLY MAN

Kind of looks like the ocean swaying all over the place, doesn't it?

His wife nods and stares on.

ELDERLY MAN

And then those two little yellow dots. Almost looks like two headlights coming at you out of nothing, doesn't it?

At this, Stefano peers in and his face brightens. Suddenly he is looking at the work from a whole new perspective.

CLOSE ON:

the painting. Green swirls borne out of blackness that wind down the canvas. Two yellow dots break up the blackness at the top of the painting.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOMBARD STREET - NIGHT

An exact match to the ethereal painting. You would never know it at first glance, but the painting is a crude representation of Lombard, the windiest street in the world. The green are the shrubs that grow around the street, and can be seen even at night. Blackness surrounds the area, but when cars first begin the descent, their headlights shine out just as in the painting. Stefano stands at the bottom of the street with a postcard of the painting in hand, and a smile smearing his face.

He begins walking backward, trying to discern from which angle the street must have been viewed for the artist. He continues walking back, further, further, passing shops, bumping into pedestrians, his gaze still torn between the postcard and the street itself. Finally he stops. The perspective seems about the same. He turns and just behind him sits:

EXT. LOMBARD CAFE - NIGHT

A large coffeehouse with ample outdoor seating. Stefano pockets the postcard and takes a seat at an empty table on the sidewalk. A man in front of him obscures his view of the top of the windy road, so he adjusts his chair for a better look. A perky, young waitress named AMY with her hair tied back bounds out to him. She is chipper and bubbly.

AMY

What can I get for you, sir?

STEFANO

I'll, uhhh, have a Cappuccino.

AMY

Be right back.

She turns to leave but:

STEFANO

Uhh, wait, miss, I want to ask you something.

AMY

What can I do you for? Something to eat as well?

STEFANO

No, no. I wondered if you have ever seen anybody sitting out here painting. Painting, or, uhh, drawing.

AMY

Oh, yeah. Painting, drawing, writing poetry. I've seen it all. Had two guys in once who wanted to film a scene for a porno movie here. They even wanted me to be in it. Management wouldn't let 'em, though.

STEFANO

So, it, uhh, happens, all the time.

AMY

Hell, mister, just look at the view.

Stefano pulls the postcard from his pocket and hands it to the waitress.

STEFANO

This. Have you ever seen anyone here painting this?

AMY

No. Usually people who sit out here just draw Lombard. Anything else?

Stefano slumps back, dejected.

STEFANO

Have you ever heard of Moretto?

AMY

Oh, the painter. Yeah. In fact, there was a guy in here last week telling me he was Moretto.

STEFANO

What? Why would he tell you this?

WAITRESS

He wanted me to go out with him. I told him to give me a good reason why I should. Then he told me he was Moretto. I still didn't go out with him, though.

STEFANO

This man ... would you know him if you saw him again?

WAITRESS

Oh, yeah. He's been in here a bunch of times.

STEFANO

What is your name?

AMY

(playfully)

Amy. What's yours?

STEFANO

Stefano DiPresso. Amy, I want to ask you to do me a favor.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - HANSPARD GALLERY - EXTERIOR - NIGHT

A fancy marble building flooded with light and adorned with a huge sign - HANSPARD GALLERY PRESENTS MORETTO. 10/06 - 11/27.

EXT. HANSPARD GALLERY - NIGHT

A long line has formed outside. Men in tuxes, women in evening gowns. Near the back of line stand Stefano in a suit, and Amy in a dress. Though they look nice, they are underdressed in comparison with their counterparts.

AMY

I thought you said this dress would be fine.

STEFANO

You look lovely. Don't worry.

AMY

I didn't know this was opening night. How did you manage to get tickets to this?

STEFANO

I just know some people. Now, look around. Is that man from the cafe here? Do you see him?

AMY

I told you. I'll let you know if I see him. Relax.

Stefano looks suspiciously at everybody around him.

STEFANO

When we get inside, we are going to split up. I want you to mingle, listen to people.

AMY

You're not a very romantic date, you know that?

INT. HANSPARD GALLERY - NIGHT

Packed with people admiring the paintings that line the walls and snacking on cheese and wine. Waiters serve at both ends of the long marble corridor. Moretto's paintings dominate the east wall - spaced neatly apart. Tuxes and evening dresses commingle, laughter and lightheartedness. Admiration at the new display. Stefano is standing before a huge painting, with a sign reading, Inside the City's Ear, Moretto, 1998. Swirling bands of orange twist into plumices of purple and white. The bottom of the painting is a sea of green. Stefano studies it with a wrinkled brow. Behind him, TWO MEN are also taking in the sight. They speak in whispers.

FIRST MAN

Eeeew. Inside the City's Ear. I think I could have done without that image.

SECOND MAN

But that's the genius of Moretto. His colors clash, his images clash. His is a unique mixture of impressionism and avant garde experimentation. It's so bold, so brash. He probes the darker side of the city, gets inside its head. Can't you feel it?

Listening in on this, Stefano only sneers with disgust. He moves on to the next work - a feast of light, yellow and orange, where the heads of men and women of different race appear without bodies, without awareness of the other heads that populate the painting. The sign above the frame reads "Isolation". Stefano examines it, still condescending. A WOMAN IN BLUE moves next to him and looks on. She is short and attractive, early 30s. She looks for a moment at the painting, then at Stefano. She does a double take.

WOMAN IN BLUE  
Pardon me. Aren't you Stefano DiPresso?

STEFANO  
(surprised)  
Uhh, yes. Yes I am.

WOMAN IN BLUE  
Wow. This is so exciting. I studied Art History at San Francisco State. I love your work. I used to go to your shows all the time in college.

STEFANO  
Thank you. I cannot tell you how nice it is to hear that. I never had this many people come out to my shows, however.

WOMAN IN BLUE  
What about that show at the Heinzl in Berkeley? I think that was still the most innovative use of light and shadow that I have ever seen. The way the sun played across each of the cities.

STEFANO  
I am... I cannot believe you remember that show... It is .. must be ten years ago. I...

Suddenly, Amy hurries next to Stefano on the other side and grabs his arm. Her eyes are big, her motions excited.

AMY  
(whispering in his ear)  
Stefano, he IS here. He's right over there.  
Follow me.

Torn, Stefano turns to the Woman in Blue. Her eyes plead with him to stay.

STEFANO  
I am sorry. My friend - she has something she wants desperately for me to see.

WOMAN IN BLUE  
Well, it was very nice to meet you, Mr. DiPresso. You have brought me great joy.

STEFANO  
Thank you. It was a-nice to meet you, uhh,...

But Amy yanks his arm and pulls him away. Stefano's head stays turned in her direction.

AMY  
You have brought her great joy? God, I can't leave you alone for a minute. Not very nice to do so much flirting right in your date's face.

Amy pulls him to the corner of the room and points to a small group of people gathered near the wine table. Two men, two women.

AMY

It's him. There. With the blue cummer-bund.

Stefano continues looking over his shoulder at the Woman in Blue.

STEFANO

But... I was just...Has he seen you? Who are those people he is with?

AMY

No, he hasn't seen me. I recognize that woman he's with. She comes into the cafe sometimes. He must have settled for her when I wouldn't go out with him.

STEFANO

Listen, you mingle at the other side of the room. Don't let him see you. Not yet.

AMY

Free drinks, right? You can find me at the other wine bar. If I'm talking to the blond guy in tails, don't interrupt.

Stefano moves slowly toward the group of four. Both women are dressed in red, and very beautiful, late 30s. The two men are the prototype businessmen, starched shirts, clean necklines, and cat-like eye contact. Their names are DONNA, JENNIFER, CHRISTOPHER, and Amy's mystery man is DAVID.

CHRISTOPHER

So, David, what did you say you do?

Stefano approaches the wine bar and listens intently.

DAVID

Oh, I'm in sales. Computers and hardware.

DONNA

And Jennifer tells me you're also an artist.

DAVID

Aaah, not really. I mean, I dabble in it. I am passionate about art, but I look at the works of a Moretto, and I realize it will never be more than a hobby for me.

JENNIFER

Oh, he's being modest. I saw something he's working on, and it was amazing.

CHRISTOPHER

Wow, we might be looking at the next Moretto.

DONNA

Or who knows? Maybe even Moretto himself.

They all laugh at this, and then move off to have a look at the art on the west wall. Grabbing a glass of red wine and cringing at the first

sip, Stefano follows just behind. The group of four slowly break apart and Stefano finds himself standing right next to David in front of a enormous watercolor of sailboats on the sea.

STEFANO

Uhh, scusi. Excuse me. I couldn't help but overhear - you are in computers. I, well, I am looking for an upgrade. I am sorry to bother you here, like this.

DAVID

No, it's no bother. No bother at all. You got good ears, huh?

STEFANO

I, so I have been told. I do not like to mix business with a night like this, of pleasure. Perhaps you have a business card, a number I could reach you at.

David reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a card as if he had been expecting to do business.

DAVID

Absolutely. Here you go. My name's David Braun. You call me anytime, OK?

David extends his hand.

STEFANO

Mr. Braun, nice to meet you. I am, uhhh, Alfonso Bertelli. I will call you. You enjoy the show.

Stefano retreats hastily away from David, bumping into Jennifer as he goes. David watches strangely.

Stefano moves back toward Amy, but she is engaged in conversation with the blond man in tails. Stefano spots the woman in blue chatting with another woman near the entrance and moves her way. As he approaches, she slips out the front door, leaving the gallery. He stops and sighs. He turns around and walks toward the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Simple, white walls, tile floors. Two urinals and two stalls. Stefano tries one stall - locked. Steps into the next stall.

INT. SECOND STALL

A toilet. Stefano stays standing. Pulls the business card from his pocket. It reads DAVID BRAUN, IVC Inc. and gives a business number. TWO VOICES can be heard just outside.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

This has got to be the best show yet. The colors are so bold, so alive.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

I'm telling you, Moretto gets better every show.  
And he's impossible to imitate because his works  
are all so different. Did you see the painting  
on the east wall with the little pieces of felt  
and stone? I've never seen anything like it.

Stefano's eyes go wide and he stuffs the card back in his pocket.

INT. HANSPARD GALLERY

Stefano is standing at the east wall staring at the painting the man had been referring to. It is a patchwork piece of a man of misaligned proportions. Smatterings of black and red paint with pieces of stone and swaths of cloth and felt. Stefano's face grows red. Amy joins him and stares for a beat at the work.

AMY  
That's very cool. Unique.

STEFANO  
It is not cool. It is not unique. Diego Vargas  
has done it. Stelbaum has done it. I have done  
it. It looks very much like mine.

AMY  
Wow, you're an artist?

STEFANO  
I was a great artist once. Better than this.  
Much better than this!!

A few people around Amy and Stefano stop and stare. Though he is trying to speak softly, he is still speaking with great emotion.

AMY  
Stefano, I just came to tell you that I'm going  
to be leaving with somebody else. I hope you  
don't mind.

STEFANO  
No, go. Go.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT

Stefano is in a robe, seated at the dining table, reading the morning paper. He sips from a coffee mug. Some sketches are scattered on the table around him. Lucio enters carrying a paper bag.

LUCIO  
Buon giorno. Come stai?

STEFANO  
Bene, grazie. E tu?

LUCIO  
I am good, Stefano. Where have you been, my  
friend?

STEFANO



I have been out hunting for Moretto.

LUCIO

You have what? Are you a hunter or a painter?  
Please remind me. I guess I get confused.

STEFANO

I think I may have found him, Lucio.

Stefano lays the business card down on the table. Lucio picks it up, takes a seat and studies it.

LUCIO

This is a salesman. You are going to kill a  
salesman now?

STEFANO

I think he is more than a salesman.

LUCIO

Why? Why you think this?

STEFANO

He is an artist. He goes to Moretto's shows. He  
even told a woman I know that he is Moretto.

LUCIO

(sarcastic)

That is probably why he has kept his secret for  
so long - because he goes around telling people.  
I tell you what - I am Moretto. You want to kill  
me?

STEFANO

I have a feeling about this, Lucio.

LUCIO

You have a feeling? You are an artist. When you  
have feelings, you put them on the canvas. Why  
don't you grab a brush - maybe the feelings will  
go somewhere.

STEFANO

I don't even remember painting well. Everything  
good in my life I am forgetting. I don't  
remember painting Italy. I used to love  
painting. Now, I do it because I am desperate.  
That is wrong.

LUCIO

Fine. You want to find this man? Let's find this  
man. I help you kill him.

STEFANO

No. Leave me alone. Do not you patronize me.

LUCIO

I will help you. I have seen your greatest  
moments. A poor immigrant boy who becomes a

success. Now I want to see your worst moments.  
Yes. I want to see you kill a salesman.

STEFANO

Leave me alone. You are not a part of this.

Stefano hurries off to the bedroom. Lucio stands, stubborn.

LUCIO

Mama mia.

EXT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano and Lucio amble down the street. Stefano is hurrying, Lucio half-keeping-up and half not wanting to go on.

LUCIO

Stefano, listen to me. This is crazy. Where are we going?

STEFANO

We are going to the address in the phone book.  
We are going to.... stake him out.

LUCIO

Stake him out? He sells computers, not drugs.  
What do you know - stake him out?

CLOSE ON - A BUILDING,

marked 1334. It is a four-story apartment complex with two glass doors in the front. Stefano checks with the page torn from the phone book.

STEFANO

(excited)

This one. This is it.

LUCIO

Now, Stefano, you think. If you were Moretto, would you live here?

STEFANO

You shut up. I do not want to imagine myself as Moretto.

Stefano begins walking around, surveying the building, as if he can see through the walls.

LUCIO

If I were a salesman, I would live here. If I were Moretto.....

STEFANO

He lives in number 207. That must be the second floor.

LUCIO

Not in Europe. In Europe, that would be the third floor. They start with the 100s on the second....

STEFANO  
BASTA!! BASTA!!

Stefano turns his back on Lucio and remains staring up at the building.

STEFANO  
He is in there. I know he is in there right now.

LUCIO  
Why don't you just blow up the whole building?  
Then you will get him for sure. Unless he is at lunch or something. You know, salesmen do take lunch.

Stefano is not listening. He is engrossed in the building, like an artist scoping a scene he is going to sketch.

LUCIO  
So, now what we do?

Stefano turns back to him. A glimmer in his eye.

STEFANO  
You, I don't know. I am going to stay here and wait for him.

Stefano turns and has a seat at a bus stop a few feet away. Lucio follows. Both men sit for a very long beat. Stefano is in the zone, staring at the entrance to the building, waiting. Lucio is looking all around, bored, still not understanding the plan. Finally,

LUCIO  
So, does he take the bus, or something?

STEFANO  
BASTA!!!

Stefano slaps his right palm against his left wrist, the Italian for STOP! Lucio shrugs and unwraps the paper bag he is holding. From it, he removes two sandwiches and offers one to Stefano. Stefano takes it, and the two eat silently.

FADE TO:

LATER

Stefano is still sitting, looking intently at the building. Lucio is beside him, dozing, his head limp on his shoulder. A huge bus pulls up at the curb in front of them, screeching to a halt. Lucio springs awake. The BUS DRIVER opens the door and looks out at the pair, as if to say Come on!

LUCIO  
Oh, no. No thank you. We are just admiring this-  
a building. This gray building.

Lucio points, the bus driver shakes his head, and the bus pulls away. Suddenly, Stefano slaps Lucio on the shoulder.

STEFANO

Him! That is him right there! And the woman he was with last night.

David and Jennifer come out the glass doors arm in arm. They head toward a red car parked on the street. David helps her with the door, and before she climbs in the driver's side, they share one last, long kiss.

LUCIO

Well, we know where he gets his inspiration.

STEFANO

She knows. She knows he is Moretto. I heard her speak of it last night.

LUCIO

Then you better be sure and kill him before she does.

David gives a final wave as she pulls away and then heads back toward the building.

LUCIO

That is Moretto? That is too bad. You can't possibly kill a man who's so in love.

STEFANO

You. I have had enough of you. All you do is patronize me. Go away. GO AWAY!! I cannot take anymore of you.

Stefano gets up from the bench and storms off down the street.

LUCIO

What? Where you going?

Lucio gets up from the bench and follows for a couple of steps. He then stops and waves his arm in disgust, sits back down.

LUCIO

Fine. You go ahead - kill him the slow way by spying on him all day. Watch him to death - see if I care.

Stefano turns around to retort, but another bus has come and Lucio hops aboard. As the bus drives past, the two men sneer at each other one final time.

EXT. DAVID'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The busy street is now mostly dead. A few cars, dim streetlights, and the occasional passerby. A man approaches the front entrance of the building, tries his key in the lock and enters. Just before the door shuts, a hand reaches out and grabs it. Stefano's. Stefano slips slyly inside the building.

INT. STAIRWELL

Stefano ascends a set of concrete stairs like a burglar.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Stefano comes through the door from the stairwell. Two lights - one on either end of the long corridor. Stefano walks by several doors, 203, 204, 205, and finally 207. He stands in front of the door for a long moment. He removes the gun from an interior jacket pocket and shifts it to an exterior pocket. He unfolds his wallet and removes a credit card. He nervously slides it down the crease of the door, clearly an amateur at this method. He makes it all the way to the knob and the card simply sticks. Stefano yanks on the card, several times, but it is jammed in the door. Now extremely nervous, Stefano pulls his keys from his pocket and foolishly tries them in the lock. They rattle unsuccessfully in the lock and then they fall to the floor with an agonizingly loud CLANG.

Stefano stands for a moment, his card still stuck in the door, eyes wide with panic. At last, he reaches down and simply turns the handle of the door. It opens easily, his credit card clapping to the floor.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stefano steps cautiously inside. Sounds of snoring. The room is simple, but with tasteful decor. A couple of paintings line the walls. A leather sofa, a short dining table, large entertainment center. Stefano removes his gun from his jacket and creeps toward the bedroom door. He reaches the door and pushes it slowly open. The snoring sounds increase.

Inside, lays David. Stefano, gun shaking in his hands, takes a step inside. With a stern look, he trains the gun on David. It shakes in his hands, and he slowly lowers it.

He returns to the main room and moves to the corner where a large easel has obviously caught his eye. The easel holds a painting, covered with a cloth.

CLOSE ON - THE EASEL

as Stefano's hand slowly pulls away the cloth to reveal a black background with a random assortment of blobs - red, green, blue. Stefano stares down at it in horror. He notices that he is pointing his gun at the piece, and lowers it. He places the gun back in his pocket.

Suddenly, David appears in the bedroom door. He is wielding a tennis racquet. Both men SCREAM.

DAVID

Jesus! What? Who the hell are you?

STEFANO

I'm sorry. I should not be here. We met last night.

DAVID

Get the hell out of here!! (pause) Last night? Wait, at the gallery?

David switches on the main light, examines Stefano.

STEFANO

Yes, remember? I wanted an upgrade.

DAVID

What the hell are you doing here?

STEFANO

I'm sorry, I, I was just having a look at your painting. I thought you were somebody else.

DAVID

My painting? What?

STEFANO

Yes, I, I heard people speak of your wonderful paintings last night, and I wanted to see for myself.

DAVID

Listen, I don't know what the hell this is, or how the hell you got in here...

Stefano backs toward the door, hands held in the air.

STEFANO

I am leaving right now. I will never bother you again. You are a terrible painter - not the man I am looking for.

DAVID

What? What did you - break in here to tell me that?

STEFANO

You could not possibly be Moretto.

As Stefano slips past him, David raises his racquet for an attack. But Stefano moves too quickly, and is out the door. David stands, stunned, for a moment, then lowers his racquet and moves to the door, where he locks it. He grabs his wallet from the bureau, and flips through it. Still breathing heavy, he starts back toward his room, but stops, stares at the corner, and then moves to the easel where he stares quizzically for a long beat at his own painting.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

Again, Victor Bustamante is here, feeding pigeons. Stefano is seated next to him, looking far less comfortable. Victor places a slice of bread on Stefano's lap.

VICTOR

Here. Be useful. Feed the birdies.

STEFANO

Victor, just listen to me.

VICTOR

Listen to you. Listen to you. Even you're sick of listening to you, Stefano.

STEFANO

I just need two tickets. Please. Some day I will do you an even bigger favor.

VICTOR

You hate Moretto. You have told me. Now you come to me every week wanting gallery tickets. I can only get two tickets, and I know hundreds of people who love Moretto. Why should I give them to you?

STEFANO

(cringing, searching for a good reason)

I ... I am trying to learn more about Moretto.

VICTOR

Non e vera. You liar. You have some vendetta. You just want to find Moretto.

Victor grabs the bread he placed on Stefano's lap. He begins crumbling it and tossing it to the birds.

STEFANO

Yes, I do want to find him. Can't you understand that? Can't you help me just a little?

VICTOR

I don't want to help you. Do you have any idea how much Moretto has done for the art world? Even young people are interested in art again. You may not be happy with the methods, my friend. But the results are brilliant. Art in this city was dying before Moretto - now our world has a heartbeat again. No, I don't think I ought to help you.

STEFANO

The art world! Moretto now is the art world. There's no room for anybody else.

VICTOR

That's not true. Moretto is famous because the work is great, well-loved because there is a piece of Moretto's soul on every canvas.

STEFANO

I was once famous. I was once well-loved.

VICTOR

That is the problem, Stefano. You were once famous, but you were never well-loved.

STEFANO

Please, please. Just one more time.

VICTOR

Two more tickets. That's it. But I will tell you  
- I am rooting against you, friend. I hope you  
never find Moretto. I hope nobody does.

INT. LEMAN GALLERY

Stefano has returned. He is one of about twenty patrons to the gallery.  
He is admiring the new wall of Moretto work - marked as such with a tall  
sign. The young man from earlier, Robert Shaw, walks past and a look of  
fear sweeps over his face as he recognizes Stefano. He attempts to skate  
by, but

STEFANO

Hello. Young man.

ROBERT

Yes? Oh, hello. Listen, I spoke to my manager  
and I'm really sorry, we just don't have room  
for new....

STEFANO

I don't care about that right now. This  
painting... who brings you this painting?

ROBERT

Uhh, you mean, how do we get Moretto's  
paintings?

STEFANO

Yes. Does somebody bring them in?

ROBERT

No. They just come special delivery.

STEFANO

And what is the return address?

ROBERT

Come on. There's no return address. They do come  
from within the city, but that's the best we  
know.

STEFANO

And payment? How do you pay Moretto?

ROBERT

Moretto donates everything to charity. The Bay  
Area Cancer Foundation and Waterhouse, a home  
for neglected kids.

STEFANO

Everything?

ROBERT

Everything.

Stefano turns to the painting in front of him.



STEFANO

This... this is a beautiful piece, isn't it?

ROBERT

Yeah. I mean, I'm no expert. But that woman.. her eyes. Every time I walk by I feel her looking at me. I feel her looking through me, really.

STEFANO

She is beautiful. This came recently?

ROBERT

Uhhh, we just got this last week. But from a gallery on the south side. I thought you didn't like Moretto.

STEFANO

This painting... this is beautiful. Moretto... aaaaahhh.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT

Stefano is seated at the dining table, sketching the face of a woman. Lucio enters with a paper bag. Stefano doesn't flinch and Lucio takes a seat across from him.

LUCIO

So, this salesman. When is the funeral?

STEFANO

Leave me alone. I do not want you around.

LUCIO

I would not come, but Gabriella makes me come.

STEFANO

She is too good for you. You should do the right thing and let her go.

LUCIO

Where would she go? She would come to you and you would make her miserable. What are you doing there?

STEFANO

It is a sketch.

LUCIO

A sketch of who? It looks like a woman. Who is this woman?

STEFANO

It is a woman in my imagination. Imagination is the birthplace of art.

LUCIO

That is not what you once told me.

STEFANO

How would you know what I told you - you never listen!

LUCIO

You once told me that all great art is born from experience. Tell me, when was the last time you experienced a woman instead of imagining her?

STEFANO

This is a woman I experienced. This is a woman that I saw.

LUCIO

Saw? Where did you see her? Did you talk to her?

STEFANO

Yes, I talked to her, but just a little. I waste so much time talking to you it makes me afraid to talk to other people.

LUCIO

You should have talked to her. Was she pretty? What did you say?

STEFANO

I said, "Hello, my name is Stefano DiPresso."

LUCIO

Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

STEFANO

What, what? Stop!

LUCIO

You do not bore a pretty woman with details about yourself. You have to ask a pretty woman questions, show her that you are more interested in her than in yourself.

STEFANO

I only told her my name!!!

LUCIO

First you show her that you are interested in her name. What was her name?

STEFANO

She, ... it all happened very fast. I don't know her name.

LUCIO

You don't know her name? You talked to her and you don't know her name?

STEFANO

She knew my work. I was surprised.

LUCIO

She knew your work and you don't know her name!  
You are a very selfish man.

STEFANO

Leave me alone. I am going to the opening  
Saturday night. I am hoping she will be there  
again.

LUCIO

I hope you are hoping. Maybe this time you will  
stop talking about yourself for a second and ask  
her name.

STEFANO

Why do you come here - to torture me? I am  
tortured enough.

LUCIO

I told you - I come here because Gabri-ella  
makes me come.

STEFANO

She makes you come because she is sick of you.  
She has to make you go somewhere.

LUCIO

I bring, of course, food.

Lucio pulls two sandwiches from the bag and lays one down before  
Stefano. Lucio begins eating in silence. Stefano sketches, ignoring the  
sandwich, but after several beats, his pencil stops, he sets it down,  
and grabs the sandwich. The two look off to different sides of the room  
to avoid each other's gaze.

STEFANO

She is too good for you. Too good.

LUCIO

At least I know her name.

INT. ZELLER GALLERY - NIGHT

Another regal affair. Much of the same art that highlighted the last  
affair lines the walls. Chic women in elegant party dresses, men in  
formal attire - like a convention of young models. There are some older  
faces in evening wear as well, including Stefano and Lucio. They stand  
in a corner, each with a glass of wine, looking at a painting of a woman  
swimming naked in a lake.

LUCIO

When Moretto paints this - I bet it isn't a  
woman from his imagination.

STEFANO

Shut up. This lake - where is there a lake like  
this?

LUCIO

Aaaah, remember the painting you did of Como?  
Como is a lake. They do not know lakes here.

Stefano dons his glasses and looks down at the title of the painting.  
Almanor in August.

STEFANO

"Almanor in August." Where is that?

LUCIO

Almanor? I don't know. It sounds made up.

STEFANO

(thoughtfully)

Almanor.

LUCIO

Where is she? Where is the woman you were  
drawing?

STEFANO

I don't know. Perhaps she will not be here. Stop  
with that. You make me nervous.

LUCIO

Of course you are nervous. You haven't spoken to  
a pretty woman in years. And when you do, you  
don't even ask her name.

STEFANO

Stop! Stop!! That is her. That is her that just  
came in.

LUCIO

Who is she with? Oh, it looks like she is alone.  
She is very pretty, Stefano. Maybe too pretty  
for you.

STEFANO

Basta. Basta. Let me alone for a minute.

The WOMAN IN BLUE is still in blue, a different, yet equally elegant  
dress. Now, her hair is worn down, and she looks even more beautiful  
than before. Stefano leaves Lucio, but rather than head toward the  
woman, he heads for the wine bar, and stands in line, looking over his  
shoulder all the while at the woman in blue. Lucio, watching this,  
attempts to motion to Stefano - get over there! When Stefano sees this,  
he motions back with the Italian STOP! sign again. The woman in blue  
heads in the other direction. Lucio approaches Stefano.

LUCIO

What happened? You suddenly remember you were  
thirsty?

STEFANO

Leave me alone. I cannot attack her as soon as  
she comes in the door. Besides, I am here to  
learn about Moretto.

LUCIO

What are you going to learn at the wine bar? You going to learn what is Moretto's favorite Chardonnay?

Lucio goes to the front of line, grabs a bottle and examines it.

LUCIO

It is a Napa Valley. OK? Have you learned all you need to know? We will search for him in the vineyards tomorrow.

Lucio returns to Stefano's side. Everyone in line regards the two quite strangely.

STEFANO

Stop it. Stop making a spectacle. There are people here who know something. I bet even Moretto himself is here somewhere. It was stupid of me to bring you.

LUCIO

You want to know? Here, we find out.

Lucio taps the BLONDE WOMAN in front of them on the shoulder.

LUCIO

Pardon, me, ma'am. We are trying to figure out which one at this party is Moretto. Can you tell us who he is?

She looks at him for a second, confused. Then, she starts to laugh.

BLONDE WOMAN

That's what we're all trying to figure out.

LUCIO

Grazie mille.

The woman turns around with a strange smile.

STEFANO

Stop it. You are making me very upset.

LUCIO

You're not upset at me. You're upset because a beautiful woman walks in and you're not brave enough to speak with her.

STEFANO

ENOUGH!!! Do me a favor, OK. Go mingle. Go talk to people - but do not be a fool. Talk to them, find out what you can.

LUCIO

First, you promise you will talk to the woman.

STEFANO

Just go.

LUCIO

You must-a promise you will talk to the woman.

STEFANO

I promise! GO!

Again, the line turns around at this outburst. Lucio scampers away from Stefano's side. Stefano picks up a glass of wine and surveys the room. He ambles over to two men staring at a dark portrait which shows an apple tree in the shape of a woman, fruit strewn on the ground, and a man resting against it. One MAN is BLACK, the other BALD.

BLACK MAN

It is about the nurturing of women, and the inherent need of men for such nurturing.

BALD MAN

No. It is about the fruits of life, given us by nature.

The black man turns to Stefano.

BLACK MAN

Excuse me, sir. What does this piece say to you?

STEFANO

It does not say anything to me. It is a peaceful Sunday afternoon.

Both men consider this, but clearly each thinks their own interpretation more fitting.

STEFANO

All of these paintings seem to come from a real place, don't you think?

BALD MAN

That is what Moretto would have us believe. But, really, Moretto creates a fantasy world of color and light that we only wish we could live in.

STEFANO

Then, tell me, who among us has that imagination?

Both men shake their heads, return to the piece at hand.

CUT TO:

LUCIO

He has approached the other side of the gallery. He pokes his head between that of a young Chinese couple, TOM and WENDY LEE.

LUCIO

Tell me, what brings you both here tonight?

TOM

(taken off guard)

This...this is one of the biggest shows of the year.

LUCIO

This Moretto...what do you know about Moretto?

WENDY

No more than anybody else. We try to make it to all the openings. I don't think I've seen you before, though.

LUCIO

No, I am not an artist. I am just a guest of the brilliant Stefano DiPresso.

Lucio points across the room. Both nod patronizingly and then turn back to the painting.

LUCIO

So, are you artists?

WENDY

No, no. My name is Wendy Lee. My husband Tom and I own an art supply store in the Haight.

LUCIO

Oh, wonderful, wonderful. As I said, my friend is an artist. I'm sure he would love to know more about it. What is the name of your store?

TOM

It's called Tom's Art Store. We have very good prices.

LUCIO

Do you have a business card? He likes business cards. Very forgetful.

TOM

Uhh, yeah. Just sec.

Tom pulls out his wallet and hands Lucio a tattered business card.

LUCIO

Well, thank you. Thank you. But you are not an artist you say?

TOM

I only sell the supplies.

LUCIO

(very suspicious)  
Oh, right. Right.

Wendy grabs Tom by the arm and the two move on to the next piece.

CUT TO:

STEFANO

who is edging closer and closer to the other side of the room, where the woman in blue, alone, is sipping wine and admiring the art from afar.

Stefano moves behind her to within feet of her. He is just about to reach out to tap her on the shoulder when a long-haired, bespectacled young man steps in front of her with wide-eyed delight.

WOMAN IN BLUE

Oh, hello!

The woman in blue steps forward and hugs the man graciously. Awkwardly, Stefano steps away. He begins backing up slowly and runs smack dab into

LUCIO.

STEFANO

I'm sorry, excuse me.

(realizing it's Lucio)

Oh, aaaahhhh!

LUCIO

Clumsy man. Why are you not talking to her?

STEFANO

I will talk to her. Right now she is talking to somebody else.

LUCIO

To who?

Stefano indicates subtly with his head.

LUCIO

To him? He is not to be worried about. He does not look like the kind of man who would be interested in a pretty woman.

STEFANO

Stop! You drive-a me crazy.

LUCIO

See, she's left him. She's left him.

The man kisses softly her hand and heads off toward the wine bar.

LUCIO

Go. Go now.

STEFANO

Alright! Alright.

Stefano straightens his tie, loosens his shirt and walks slowly toward her.

STEFANO'S POV

He moves slowly, inching up again on the back of her dress, turned with a few other admirers toward a large painting of two children at play in



an oak grove. Again breathlessly close, ready to reach out, she again turns to the side, never looking back, and begins walking to the other side of the room. Stefano turns to follow her, and suddenly David's face comes directly into view.

David grabs Stefano by the collar.

DAVID  
Alright, man. What the hell's your problem?

Jennifer comes on to the scene.

JENNIFER  
David, what are you doing?

DAVID  
This is him. This is the guy I was telling you about. Crazy bastard that broke in to my apartment.

STEFANO  
Sir, sir. I am terribly sorry. I can explain. Please let me go.

JENNIFER  
David, let him go.

David loosens his grip on Stefano's shirt.

DAVID  
Listen. I don't know who you are, but if I catch you following me one more time...

STEFANO  
You will never see me again. I am sorry. It was a terrible misunderstanding.

There is still fire in David's eyes. He's obviously been fuming about this. Jennifer grabs his arm and pulls him away.

JENNIFER  
Come on, David. Just walk away. He's only trying to get a response from you. Just a lonely old man.

David turns as if to walk away, and then swivels violently back around. This sudden motion startles Stefano, who leaps, the contents of his red wine staining the front of his shirt.

DAVID  
You're goddam lucky I don't call the police right now.

Jennifer tugs on his arm again.

JENNIFER  
Come on.

Stefano is left standing with a huge stain down the entire front of his white shirt. He looks around in embarrassment, and then makes a dash for the bathroom.

INT. ZELLER MEN'S ROOM

Stefano is at the sink, rubbing at the shirt with a series of paper towels. Lucio enters with a glass of white wine.

LUCIO

Stefano, Stefano. Clumsy man. Look at you. One minute you are going to shoot a businessman, next minute it is you who looks like you got-a shot.

STEFANO

Leave me alone.

LUCIO

While you have been in here cleaning yourself, the woman, she left.

Stefano begins scrubbing the shirt even more ferociously.

LUCIO

Water's never going to get that out. You know what gets out red wine? White wine.

Stefano turns to him to say something, and as he does, Lucio splashes the entire contents of his white wine on Stefano's chest. Though it does reduce the stain substantially, the red from his shirt travels to Stefano's face.

STEFANO

You are an idiot. But I am a worse idiot for bringing you.

Stefano grabs Lucio and pushes him against the bathroom wall.

LUCIO

Will you still say I'm an idiot if I tell you that I think I found Moretto?

Stefano loosens his grip but still has him pinned against the wall.

STEFANO

What?

Just then, David enters and stares at the two. He points at Stefano.

DAVID

You're not right, man.  
(to Lucio)  
I'll get help.

CUT TO:

INT. LUCIO AND GABRIELLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stefano, Lucio, and Gabriella are all working on the final bites of plates of pasta.

STEFANO  
Buonissimo, Gabriella. (indicating Lucio) You are too, too good for this one.

GABRIELLA  
You sound like my mama on my wedding day.

LUCIO  
Alright, alright. Let's clear the plates.

Lucio excitedly collects all the dishes from the table. He scampers to the kitchen.

GABRIELLA  
(to Stefano)  
Thirty years I ask him to clean up. Thirty years. What did you do to him?

Lucio returns and pulls something from his pocket. It is the card that he received from Tom Lee. He sets it proudly on the table. Stefano picks it up, puts on his glasses and examines it.

STEFANO  
Tom's Art Store? What is this? You telling me I need new supplies?

GABRIELLA  
It's a poor painter blames his brush.

LUCIO  
No, I got that from a man at the show. Don't you understand? That is Moretto.

Lucio looks at them with excitement. They stare back in confusion. Lucio runs to the kitchen.

GABRIELLA  
My Mama told me - don't marry that man. His bus don't make it all the way to Rome. (shouting to the sky) Mi dispiace, mama. I'm sorry.

Lucio returns quickly with a pad of yellow paper and a pen.

LUCIO  
Now, who's paintings did we go to see?

Nobody answers him, but Gabriella shakes her head violently and sighs audibly.

LUCIO  
Moretto's. Si?

In block letters, he writes MORETTO'S on the pad of paper.

LUCIO

Now, what is the name of the business on the card?

STEFANO  
(annoyed)  
It's Tom's Art Store!

LUCIO  
Si, si. Va bene.

He writes it as he says it - TOM'S STORE.

LUCIO  
You see, look at that word. Now watch.

Lucio begins crossing out the letters in TOM'S STORE, and replacing them below, until he has spelled MORETTO'S.

LUCIO  
(very excited)  
Hanno capito? You see?

There is a long pause as the other two digest this.

GABRIELLA  
There is something wrong with you!!!

STEFANO  
Where do you come up with these ideas?

GABRIELLA  
It is my fault. I let him go off to a show with artists. Artists are all crazy people, and he's just one step away. I knew that.

Gabriella begins with the Sign of the Cross.

LUCIO  
Don't you see? It makes perfect sense.

STEFANO  
It makes no sense at all. Why do I listen to you?

Gabriella shakes her head scoldingly at Lucio.

GABRIELLA  
Mama mia.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOM'S ART STORE - DAY

Stefano ambles up to the front of the store. It is small, but colorful, the name painted in bright colors on the front window. Stefano stands, contemplative for a long beat and then moves to the door and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S ART STORE - DAY

Stefano enters and a little bell above the door rings. Three rows of supplies - brushes, paint, canvases, easels, colored pencils. Tom Lee is at the front counter.

TOM  
Hello. Can I help you find something?

STEFANO  
I'm,... uhh, just having a look.

TOM  
Was it your friend I met at the gallery on Saturday?

STEFANO  
I, uhhh, yes, he told me about your store.

TOM  
He tells me you are an artist. What is your name?

STEFANO  
Yes, yes. I am an artist. My name is Alfonso Bertelli, but I am not selling too well lately.

TOM  
Aaaaah, they say it is a tough market. A lot of competition.

STEFANO  
Well, Moretto has destroyed most of the competition.

TOM  
Yes. Moretto is good. Very, very good.

STEFANO  
And you? Are you an artist?

TOM  
That's funny. That's what your friend kept asking also. No, I'm not. I just run a business. Businessmen usually make poor artists. And vice versa I would guess.

STEFANO  
It must get tempting sometimes. All these supplies. You must have at least tried.

TOM  
Before this, my wife and I owned an auto parts store. And you know, I never got the urge to build a car, either. I go to a lot of shows. I enjoy art. But artists always tell me that inspiration comes from more than just supplies. Isn't that true?

STEFANO

It used to be I didn't have to think about where inspiration came from. Now, I don't know.

TOM

Well, I'm not saying new supplies won't help. I've got the best prices you'll find.

STEFANO

Aaaah, yes. Yes. I can see that. Do you have any of the Calavari canvases? The twenty-six by eighteen?

TOM

Yeah. Uhh, aisle three. Just in back.

Stefano grabs a couple of canvases from the third aisle. He tests them with his thumbs for tension. He brings them to the front. Tom Lee smiles at him.

TOM

There is a man who comes in here quite often. He buys a lot of these canvases. I've wondered to myself if maybe he was Moretto. They say Moretto uses these.

Stefano pretends not to show a tremendous amount of interest in this.

STEFANO

Oh. He.. he comes in a lot, you say? Perhaps I know him - I... do you know his name?

TOM

Uhhh, let's see. Philip something. He owns that bar down on the corner of 23rd and Fillmore. The Dog House. Does that ring a bell?

STEFANO

Aaah, no, no. Nobody from my circle.

TOM

Well, he says he buys paintings for the bar from local artists if you're interested.

Tom hands him a bag.

STEFANO

Thank you. Thank you very much.

TOM

Well, come back anytime. Bring your friend.

Stefano exits and Tom watches him go. After a beat, Tom picks up a telephone and dials.

TOM

Hey, Philip. It's Tom. That strange Italian guy you were watching last night just came in here. He says his name is Alfonso Bertelli. I

mentioned Moretto and he got pretty freaked out.  
(pause) Yeah, see if you can find Bertelli... B-E-  
R-T-E-L-L-I.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano is alone in the dim light of his shaded room. The sketch of the woman in blue is completed, tacked to the wall. He is at the easel, applying the first texture to a portrait of the sketch. He is a freed soul when painting, his movements melodic, all traces of burden lifted from his brow. With intricate detail, he traces the outline of her face.

He moves to his palette, the tantrums of an OPERATIC SOPRANO filling the room. He touches pink to white to orange until he has achieved a fleshy tone. He almost dances from sketch to canvas, gently applying flesh to the face. His spirit is lifted in the craft of this new painting - an awakened soul.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

Stefano ambles up to Victor's familiar fountain-side bench. He is carrying a brown paper bag. Rather than feeding the birds, Victor is buried behind a book on Renaissance art. Stefano has a seat next to him.

VICTOR  
Stefano. How was the show?

STEFANO  
Aaaah, it was very exciting.

VICTOR  
A new appreciation for Moretto - have you?

STEFANO  
A new appreciation, yes. I brought this for you  
to say thank you.

Stefano hands him the paper bag - Victor removes from it a bottle of red wine.

VICTOR  
Ah, grazie. A Chianti. That's very nice. Not  
necessary. Not necessary.

STEFANO  
It's just my way of saying thank you.

VICTOR  
(inspecting the bottle)  
You know, they say red wine can leave a very  
nasty stain.

Stefano is taken off-guard by this obviously pointed remark.

STEFANO  
What, you.....?

Victor smiles slyly at him.

STEFANO  
How did you...?

VICTOR  
I had a friend there keeping an eye on you. I  
take it you did not find your Moretto.

STEFANO  
No. Not yet. I want to ask you one last....

VICTOR  
(cutting him off)  
You want tickets for the opening at the Hanson  
Gallery. I have already given them away. But I  
have a better idea for you. The university is  
sponsoring a show that opens in a few weeks. New  
work from local artists. You bring a couple of  
pieces by my office, I will get you in the show.  
So, you'll be busy that night anyhow. No more  
hunting down Moretto.

Stefano looks a little depressed, but must graciously accept this offer.

STEFANO  
OK, thank you. I will bring some of my work by  
soon.

VICTOR  
How is your painting coming?

STEFANO  
I am feeling better lately. I think you will  
like my newest work.

Victor rises from the bench and grabs his book, his bottle of wine.

VICTOR  
Bene. Soon, then. Thank you for the vino. I will  
try to be careful with it.

STEFANO  
Uhh, one more thing. The, uhh, charity for  
children that Moretto donates to ... what is the  
name again?

Victor pauses, should he tell him?

VICTOR  
The Waterhouse.

EXT. WATERHOUSE - DAY

A sign reads WATERHOUSE. A small playground with newly paved and freshly  
painted hopscotch and four square boxes. Several children play at  
tetherball and jump-rope. Clearly an inner-city neighborhood. Stefano  
ambles up to the fence surrounding the playground. He watches distantly  
as the children play, scream, run, fall.

INT. WATERHOUSE - DAY



Stefano steps inside a small office where a SECRETARY at a desk is on the phone. Children's artwork lines the walls. The secretary sets down the phone and peers up.

SECRETARY

Can I help you, sir?

STEFANO

Uh, yes. I have a question. It is about Moretto.

SECRETARY

About Moretto? Sir, if you'd like to know about our foundation, I can talk at you for hours. You want to know about Moretto you've come to the wrong place.

STEFANO

Surely somebody here has tried to find out who is giving all this money.

SECRETARY

Wish we had time for such things. You've heard the expression about gift horses and all, right?

Stefano nods. The phone rings. The woman answers and Stefano slips out the door.

EXT. WATERHOUSE - DAY

Stefano is retreating past the playground again. Suddenly, slightly obscured by a bush, he stops and stares.

CLOSE ON:

The Woman in Blue, who is playing with some of the children, holding one end of a jumprope. Stefano stays behind the bush, and simply watches her. He pulls from his pocket a pad of paper and begins to sketch her again. A LITTLE GIRL with pens and paper comes up behind and startles him.

LITTLE GIRL

What are you doing?

STEFANO

I am, uhh, drawing.

LITTLE GIRL

What are you drawing?

STEFANO

People. I am drawing people.

LITTLE GIRL

We got new markers and paint. I'm drawing my mom and my brother.

The little girl holds up her drawing - mom and brother.

STEFANO

That's very good. Good for you. It is important to draw.

LITTLE GIRL  
Can I draw with you?

Stefano looks around nervously, realizes he is still hiding behind a bush. But there are few people around, and he is pretty well obscured.

STEFANO  
Uhh, yes. You may draw with me. Of course.

The little girl takes a seat next to Stefano, and they both continue their work silently.

CUT TO:

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano is again at the easel, working on the painting of the woman in blue - his strokes are strong, his eyes as vibrant as the colors he is caressing into her lapels. There is a loud KNOCK on the door. Stefano is clearly irritated to be interrupted at this moment. He moves to the door and opens it. Standing there is a large woman in a housedress and too much makeup. This is MRS. STENBERG, Stefano's landlady.

MRS. STENBERG  
Stefano, you know why I am here.

STEFANO  
Mrs. Stenberg, I will have your money by the weekend.

MRS. STENBERG  
No, no, no. You have been a wonderful tenant for twelve years. Never once late with the rent. Now, this is the third month in a row - late. It is the sixteenth.

STEFANO  
Very soon, Mrs. Stenberg. I will have it very soon.

She looks sternly at him, shakes her head, and finally shrugs.

MRS. STENBERG  
I'm sorry, Stefano, but it had better be very, very soon.

INT. GIOVANONI MARKET

The market that Lucio and Gabriella own. Small, but well-stocked. Breads and fruits dominate the right side, the dairy and frozen foods in back. Three check-out lines. To the right side of the store is the meat department, where Lucio is behind the counter in apron and hat. Stefano enters the store, walks through the small turnstile. He scans the room and spots Lucio at the meat counter. He heads that way.

LUCIO

(to Stefano)  
Hello, sir. Can I interest you in some Italian prosciutto? It is fresh.

STEFANO  
How can Italian prosciutto be fresh if it is in San Francisco, you liar? What are you doing back there?

Gabriella approaches the two from behind.

GABRIELLA  
That's what I tell him, too. What are you doing back there? He's gonna hurt himself with one of those big knives. He's not too smart, you know?

Stefano nods, agreeing with this.

LUCIO  
My butcher, he is sick. Not easy to find a spare butcher, either. What do you think, you can just look up BUTCHER in the yellow pages?

STEFANO  
I do not know. It is not a problem I have ever had.

GABRIELLA  
He's gonna hurt himself.

STEFANO  
I came by to invite you both to an art show at the state university on Saturday night.

GABRIELLA  
If this is another way to go searching for people to kill, you can leave me out.

STEFANO  
No, no. This will be a show with some of my art.

GABRIELLA  
Have you painted more villages in Italy?

STEFANO  
Villages in Italy - no. That is from when I was a child. I must paint something new.

LUCIO  
He's painting a woman. He's painting a woman he's afraid to talk to - so instead he can just talk to the painting.

GABRIELLA  
Oh, you poor, sad man talking to your paintings.

STEFANO  
I am not talking to my paintings!! This woman, I have seen her again. She works at the shelter

that Moretto donates money to. I think that is why she is interested in Moretto.

LUCIO  
Did you talk to her?

STEFANO  
No. It was from afar. I only came by to say I hope you will come to the show.

GABRIELLA  
Of course we will come. I am happy you are doing more painting than killing.

STEFANO  
Very good. Saturday the 29th. Eight o'clock at the university.

LUCIO  
Perhaps you would like some ground beef to go?

GABRIELLA  
Ground beef! What's he gonna do with ground beef, make a sculpture? The man can paint entire villages, but he can't even turn on a stove.

Stefano turns to leave.

STEFANO  
I will see you at the show.

GABRIELLA  
(calling after him)  
You need a wife, Stefano. You need a wife to feed you. To feed you!!

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - THE DOG HOUSE

The outside of the pub that Tom Lee spoke of. A bright sign on the outside, and a huge dog painted across the building.

INT. THE DOG HOUSE - NIGHT

A small, upscale pub with paintings in places you would normally expect beer signs. Stefano is seated at the bar, sipping on a glass of wine.

At the back of the pub, PHILIP ESCOBAR is on a phone. He is peering through the small buzz of patrons in Stefano's direction.

PHILIP  
(into phone)  
Yeah. He's here right now.

Philip hangs up the phone and strides to the bar. He lifts the gangway and takes his place behind it.

PHILIP  
(to Stefano)  
Hey. Can I get you another?

STEFANO

No. No, I am quite alright. I...I was told that a man named Philip buys art.

PHILIP

I do. I do. I'm a collector. You an artist?

STEFANO

Uhh, yes, I am.

PHILIP

Oh, yeah? What's your name?

STEFANO

Uhh, Stefano. Stefano DiPresso.

Philip looks at him strangely as he says this.

PHILIP

Stefano DiPresso. Hmmm. Have you sold much work?

STEFANO

Years ago I sold everything. Lately, it has been far more difficult. And you - are you an artist?

PHILIP

Yeah, I dabble in it. 'Course, if I was much of an artist, I guess I wouldn't have to decorate this place with other people's paintings, would I?

Philip laughs heartily at this. Stefano extends a spurious chuckle.

STEFANO

Even a great artist must recognize the work of others.

PHILIP

Well, that's what an amateur like me is banking on. So, you got some work you'd like to show me?

STEFANO

Uh, yes. If you're interested.

PHILIP

Like I said, I'm a collector. I'm always looking. It's a great tax write-off, and as you can see it gives this place a classy feel. Nothing too abstract or wild, though, you know what I mean?

STEFANO

Yes, yes. When should I stop by?

PHILIP

Things slow down in here after 10:30. If you're free tonight, I'll have some time after that.

STEFANO

That's fine. Tonight then.

INT. HANSON GALLERY - NIGHT

The same gallery where the last show was held. Moretto's paintings still dominate the walls - a smaller, more casually dressed crowd. Stefano is strolling through the large room, taking casual glances at some works, and more thoughtful gazes at others. He stops at the far end of the room, and stares at a tall painting.

CLOSE ON:

the painting. It is a bedroom. Three candles burn on a small table which also contains a gold hairbrush. A lattice work window is open slightly and yellow curtains billow in the breeze. A woman's reflection can be seen in the window, and the door on the edge of the painting seems to be crumbling away. It is entitled, "No Escape".

BACK TO:

STEFANO

who is staring thoughtfully. A young woman, TANYA, 20, black, very pretty, stands next to him and stares at the work also.

TANYA

What do you think that means - "No Escape"?

Stefano is a little startled by conversation.

STEFANO

Uhh, perhaps it is a statement about artists. Sometimes artists begin to feel that they have only so many ideas, and once they have used them all they start to wish that they could escape themselves - but, of course, they can't.

TANYA

Do you think Moretto ever runs out of ideas?

STEFANO

Every artist does.

TANYA

Then where can they come up with new ideas?

STEFANO

They must find something new that gives them inspiration. Inspiration feeds ideas.

TANYA

What about the open window?

STEFANO

Uuuuh, perhaps the window to the artist's mind. It looks out on everything in a certain light. But it has been opened, and it is windy. Perhaps the inspiration has escaped, but the artist cannot.

TANYA

Wow! You must be a big fan.

STEFANO

A big fan of art? Si. Yes, I am.

TANYA

No. No. I mean a big fan of Moretto.

Stefano's smile fades a bit at this.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stefano is securing the painting from the beginning - ÒAndalusian EyesÓ into a carrying case. Lucio enters. He is carrying his standard paper bag.

LUCIO

Buona sera.

STEFANO

Buona sera. Mi dispiace, my friend. I'm just on my way out.

LUCIO

It is almost midnight. Where will you go at this time? I think your insomnia has made you crazy.

STEFANO

I am going to try to sell this painting.

LUCIO

At midnight?

Gabriella walks in now, behind Lucio.

GABRIELLA

I found a parking spot. Can you believe it?  
(notices Stefano) Where is he going?

LUCIO

He says he is going to sell a painting.

GABRIELLA

Sell a painting now? To who? Are you dealing in drugs, Stefano?

STEFANO

No. There is a bar looking to buy paintings. I am going to show him this.

GABRIELLA

A bar? You paint beautiful things. You do not paint doggies smoking cigarettes. What do you want with a bar?

LUCIO

I agree. A bar is not the place for your paintings.

STEFANO

There is no longer any place for my paintings.  
No galleries will take this, so now I try to get  
it shown somewhere.

LUCIO

Are you taking the painting of the woman?

STEFANO

No. That is for the show this weekend.

LUCIO

I think it is because you know it is beautiful.  
It does not belong in a bar.

GABRIELLA

You should not go, Stefano. Your work deserves  
better than a bar.

Stefano grabs the carrying case and hastily makes for the door.

STEFANO

My work deserves better than a pawn shop, too.  
But there is nothing I can do about it anymore.  
Nothing.

With this, he moves out the door, throwing on a jacket.

GABRIELLA

A bar!?

LUCIO

I do not understand.

EXT. THE DOGHOUSE - NIGHT

Stefano ambles up outside and checks his watch. 12:08. He pushes through  
the door and enters.

INT. THE DOGHOUSE - NIGHT

A couple of wistful patrons, businessmen still in suits. Philip is  
behind the bar wiping down glasses with a towel. Stefano steps to the  
bar with the carrying case in hand.

PHILIP

Mr. Di...DiP...

STEFANO

DiPresso. Stefano DiPresso.

PHILIP

Well, Stefano, follow me. We can talk in my  
office.

Philip goes out from behind the bar and motions to a waitress who is  
cleaning tables to relieve him. Stefano follows him to the door in back.  
Philip holds it open for Stefano, who enters. Philip enters behind him.



INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Philip snaps on the light, revealing two men in ski masks standing behind a desk. Stefano snaps around, confused. Philip shuts the door behind him and turns the lock. He motions to a chair in front of the desk. A book shelf lines one wall - two paintings the other.

STEFANO

What is this?

PHILIP

Well, Mr. DiPresso,... is it Mr. DiPresso or Mr. Bertelli? A friend of mine told me you have called yourself Alfonso Bertelli. So, I'm confused.

One of the two men removes his ski mask. It is Tom Lee.

TOM

Dammit, Philip. I thought I remained anonymous.

PHILIP

You were until you took off that stupid mask.

Stefano looks back and forth at them both, incredulous.

STEFANO

What the hell is this? Why are you wearing that ridiculous thing?

PHILIP

We've seen you at the galleries, Mr.....

A long questioning pause.

STEFANO

My name is DiPresso. Stefano DiPresso.

TOM

Well, that's not what you told me, Mr. Bertelli.

STEFANO

I was... I was just having a game.

PHILIP

Exactly what we thought. And then we thought, why would this strange man, who attracted everybody's attention at the show the other night try to have a game? Why? Because you're trying to hide something.

TOM

Let me see that painting in the bag.

The still masked man at the door is large, imposing, silent.

STEFANO

No. I do not like this. I think I will be leaving now.

Stefano gets up to leave but the man at the door steps aggressively in his way.

PHILIP

I want to see that painting.

Stefano slowly unzips the painting, reveals "Andalusian Eyes". Philip bends down to inspect it.

STEFANO

What do you want from me? I am sorry I lied to you about my name. I have nothing to hide.

PHILIP

(ignoring him)

This is good. This is really good. I think it must be him.

TOM

We figured out who you are, Mr. Moretto. I always thought that name sounded Italian.

STEFANO

That's because it is Italian, you idiot. But it is not me!!

PHILIP

I saw in the paper the other day that one of your original pieces sold at an auction for two and a half million dollars. All we want is a million of that, and we won't tell a soul.

STEFANO

Oh, you just want a million dollars? Why would I be trying to sell you a painting for a couple thousand if I had a million?

TOM

Look at this painting. This must be one of your rejects. I bet you just do this as a front. That way people don't suspect you.

PHILIP

We've been going to your shows for a year. Never anyone acting strangely, never anything suspicious. Then, the last two shows, there you are - not even looking at the paintings, but just watching people, listening. Wanting to know what they say about you, huh?

STEFANO

What the hell are you talking about?

TOM

I saw you send your friend over to spy on my wife and I.

STEFANO

You idiot. My friend thought you were Moretto.

TOM

What?

STEFANO

Because of the name of your store.

TOM

The name of my store?

PHILIP

Alright, listen. You will deliver to us a million dollars cash by Saturday at this time or we're going public to every major news station in the bay area.

STEFANO

What are you going to tell them?

PHILIP

We're going to tell them you are Moretto. Your real name is Stefano DiPresso. You live at 8385 Bush. We'll be as famous as you.

STEFANO

You're going to tell them I am Moretto? Good. Do it. Maybe then I can sell a painting.

TOM

Don't take us for stupid. One million dollars next week or your picture makes every front page you can find. And your days of mystery will be done.

STEFANO

This is ridiculous. Let me go.

Stefano goes to zip up his carrying case, but Philip grabs his hand.

PHILIP

No, no. You can go now, but we'll be keeping this as collateral. We had better see you with a briefcase full of bills by Saturday. You got that?

STEFANO

Yeah. I understand. You two are sure clever. I didn't think I'd ever be found out, but I give you credit. I'll be back here with your million dollars, OK?

Philip and Tom Lee smile widely.

PHILIP

And don't try anything funny with us.

STEFANO

(sickly sarcastic)

Not with you. You're very clever. I don't know how you did it. I'll see you next week. Please do not tell.

The man in the mask opens the door and offers Stefano exit. He takes it.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOGHOUSE - NIGHT

Stefano steps through the door into the orange-lit night. He takes a few steps and then stares back ruefully at the bar.

STEFANO  
Idiots!

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano is at the table, eating chicken from the paper bag that Lucio had brought the night before. Lucio walks through the door and Stefano looks up with a guilty grimace, having been caught eating the chicken.

STEFANO  
What, you don't knock when you enter a man's home in the morning? What if I had a woman over?

LUCIO  
What if you had a woman? What if you had a woman? I stopped asking myself that fifteen years ago. What if you had a woman? (pause) You are eating the pollo for breakfast? What kind of a breakfast is that?

STEFANO  
(flatly)  
You gave it to me - so I eat it.

LUCIO  
I gave it to you to eat, yes. But not at 8:30 in the morning.

Lucio moves to the cupboards and opens them. Inside are some spices, sugar, and a couple of potatoes.

LUCIO  
I will make some coffee. Where is the coffee?

STEFANO  
I am out of coffee.

LUCIO  
You are out of coffee? What do you mean you are out of coffee?

STEFANO  
*Out of coffee* - it means I don't have any. Twenty-five years you have been in this country, you should learn the language.

LUCIO  
(still dwelling on it)  
Out of coffee.....

STEFANO  
You want coffee - go buy yourself coffee.

LUCIO  
Speaking of buying - did the bar buy your painting?

STEFANO  
No.

LUCIO  
No? Why not? It is a beautiful painting.

STEFANO  
I decided you were right - my work is too good for a bar. I cannot have my painting hanging in a den of lechery and drunken-ness.

Lucio considers his friend strangely. This is certainly a different tune than he was singing last night.

LUCIO  
Of course. I understand. I...I must leave for work now. You come by the market this afternoon and we can have some lunch together. OK?

STEFANO  
Perhaps. I have some things to do today, you know.

LUCIO  
Well, I hope I see you. And Gabriella, she hopes so. She did not get to talk to you last night.

STEFANO  
Forse. Maybe for Gabriella.

LUCIO  
Si, si. Ci vediamo dopo.

With this, Lucio is out the door. Stefano stuffs the chicken back in the bag.

INT. HALLWAY - STEFANO'S BUILDING - DAY

Lucio travels quickly down the long corridor. He looks back over his shoulder to make sure that Stefano is not coming behind him. At the end of the hall, he stops at a door marked 137. He KNOCKS gently, and Mrs. Stenberg appears there when the door opens.

MRS. STENBERG  
Well, hello. If it isn't Robin Hood? You have more money to give to the poor, I presume?

LUCIO

Yes, ma'am, I just want to make sure there is not any trouble.

CUT TO:

INT. PALMER'S PAWN SHOP - DAY

The same pawn shop that Stefano visited earlier. Stefano is at the counter talking to the MANAGER. There is something rolled up in cloth on the counter and Stefano unrolls it to reveal the gun.

MANAGER

Hey, I'm sorry, buddy. You bought that over a month ago. I can't give you your money back now.

STEFANO

I don't want my money back.

MANAGER

Well, what - is it not working or something? What happened?

STEFANO

What happened is I used to think I was an artist, and now I don't think so anymore. Then, I thought I was a killer, but I'm much, much worse at that.

MANAGER

(not quite understanding)  
Well, those are both tough fields to break into.

STEFANO

I don't want my money back. I just want to make a trade.

MANAGER

A trade, huh? Well, we got some new hunting knives in. Course, if you say you've given up on being a killer...

STEFANO

No, no hunting knives. I have a better idea.

EXT. BROWN STREET - DAY

Stefano is walking slowly down the street with his old painting "Luglio a Locarno" under his arm.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano has "Luglio a Locarno" propped up on an easel and he is carefully dusting it off. It is in remarkably good shape, only the frame showing the wear of several years. Stefano takes out a palate and a brush and applies a very thin layer to sections that may have lost some lustre.

He then moves over and carefully takes off the sheet covering the painting of the woman in blue. For all the magic and mayhem of the busy

"Luglio a Locarno", this work is even more resplendent - an explosion of light, and a face painted so lovingly one can feel the soft skin. He has filled in her blue dress now, and curls of black hair caress her shoulders. She is bathed in a gorgeous glow, with eyes both timid and challenging. Stefano takes a step back to admire his handiwork. He dims the lights in his studio, and as the camera moves back to him, we see pools forming in his eyes. He has a seat, and as the tears stain his crimson cheeks, he stares with tenderness and desperation at the last breath of his life as an artist.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Victor is seated at a desk in his university office. He is leafing through student papers, gnawing a paper clip. Stefano hurriedly enters. He is toting a large carrying case.

VICTOR  
Stefano, at last. The show starts in two hours.  
We must get your work over to the gallery or you  
will not be in the show.

STEFANO  
Yes, yes. I will follow you.

VICTOR  
Wait. First let me see what you brought for us.

Stefano unzips the great carrying case and produces both portraits, lovingly wrapped in styrofoam. He first unearths "Luglio a Locarno". It is in a brand new frame. Victor dons his glasses again to see.

STEFANO  
"Luglio a Locarno".

VICTOR  
This looks much like your work of old, Stefano.  
You told me that your work had taken you in new  
directions.

STEFANO  
You don't like it?

VICTOR  
It is a marvelous piece. It looks very familiar.

STEFANO  
Well, you must see this other.

Stefano takes great care in unearthing the painting of the woman in blue.

STEFANO  
I call her "Woman in Blue".

Victor looks with wide-eyed amazement at the portrait. Stefano had not expected this kind of response.

VICTOR

It's beautiful, Stefano. She...she is a woman I know.

STEFANO

You mean, you mean she comforts you?

VICTOR

No. Well, yes, but no, I mean this is a woman that....

Just then, the woman in blue, ROSALIND, who is actually now in a red dress, appears at the door.

ROSALIND

Victor, I just came by to see...

(she notices Stefano)

what time you're going to the show.

(to Stefano)

Mr. DiPresso. Hello. You probably don't remember me....

VICTOR

I have a feeling he does.

Stefano hurriedly turns the painting over on its back.

STEFANO

No, no. I...I do remember you. We met at the gallery, uhh, a few weeks ago. But I... I never got your name.

Rosalind enters the room. Victor watches with fascination.

ROSALIND

Oh, it's Rosalind Molitor. It's great to see you again.

She extends her hand and Stefano, finally removing his hands from the now embarrassing painting, shakes it graciously.

STEFANO

Stefano DiPre...ahh, you know that. What, what brings you here? To the university, I mean?

VICTOR

Rosalind is one of our lecturers. She's the new jewel of the department.

STEFANO

Oh, you, you teach art history?

ROSALIND

Actually, no. I teach Contemporary Art and Feminism in Art. This semester I am teaching some of your work, Mr. DiPresso.

STEFANO

(bumbling, stumbling)



No, no, uhh, call me Stefano, please. I am flattered. I cannot even tell you how flattered I am. My work?

VICTOR  
Stefano's going to show some of his new work tonight. Would you like to see them?

ROSALIND  
Oh, I would love to. Are these both.....

STEFANO  
NO! NO! It is a surprise. I am... uhh, superstitious about anyone seeing my work before a show.

ROSALIND  
I understand. Kind of like the bride on her wedding day.

VICTOR  
Stefano doesn't know much about the comings and goings of a bride on her wedding day.

Stefano shoots him a mean look.

ROSALIND  
Well, I'll see you both over at the gallery, then. I need to stop by Barbara's office on the way.

STEFANO  
Oh, it was a pleasure to meet you, Rosalind.

ROSALIND  
I look forward to your new paintings. You've really been a great inspiration to me.

Stefano is too dumbstruck to much know what to say to this. He smiles enthusiastically as she exits.

STEFANO  
Tha..thank you.

Rosalind leaves with a wave.

VICTOR  
As I was saying, the woman in your painting looks remarkably like a colleague of mine. If I didn't know better, I'd say it **must** be her.

STEFANO  
I cannot do it. I cannot exhibit this painting tonight.

Stefano snatches up the painting and goes to return it to the carrying case.

VICTOR

Stefano! Relax. That is the most vibrant, beautiful thing I have seen you paint in over a decade.

STEFANO

She will think I am a fool. Such a fool!

VICTOR

It is proof of your genius. She is a big fan of yours. You have no idea how much it will mean to her that you have captured her so lovingly.

STEFANO

Oh, no no. I shouldn't have painted a real woman. It's that Lucio. He pollutes my mind with terrible ideas!!

VICTOR

NO! Don't you understand? It is so alive because it is from your heart. I have suffered through you *imagining* the jungles of Africa, the fields of Spain, the flats of Utah on Christmas eve, and producing them like an amateur on the canvas. You have something **real** here!!!

STEFANO

I don't know.

VICTOR

We are going to go out there and somebody is going to buy that painting for a huge amount. Because it is beautiful. Because it is alive.

Stefano sits back down at the desk and rubs his temples. Victor slowly takes a seat again across from him.

VICTOR

But, for the future, there are easier ways to meet women, you know?

INT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY - NIGHT

A smallish, but stylish space. Facades of pillars in each corner, and a floor of smooth marble. It is well-lit on all sides, with individual lights aligned above each painting. There are about forty paintings in all. Under each is a small ballot box, where patrons can drop their bids. Stefano's two paintings have been set up side by side. Lucio and Gabriella stand next to him in their finest. Stefano stands very close to the wall, largely obscuring the *Woman in Blue*. Gabriella sidles up to get a better look.

GABRIELLA

Move! I cannot see your painting.

Stefano looks suspiciously around, but not spotting her, moves aside to give Gabriella a better look.

STEFANO

Hurry, hurry. Have a look.

Lucio and Gabriella both move in for a closer look.

GABRIELLA

Is this the woman you've been telling me about?  
Oh, she is beautiful, Stefano. The light on her  
face simply shines off the canvas.

LUCIO

It is amazing, Stefano. It looks just like her.  
She must have posed for you.

GABRIELLA

Oh, it could not look like her. Nobody is this  
beautiful.

Suddenly, Stefano shoves the two aside and jumps in front of the  
painting. Rosalind approaches from behind.

ROSALIND

Hello again, Stefano.

Gabriella turns around, and on seeing Rosalind, her eyes go huge. She  
immediately starts in with the Sign of the Cross.

GABRIELLA

Oh, mama mia.

Stefano is standing on his tip-toes to cover as much of the painting as  
he can.

STEFANO

Uhh, Rosalind, these are my friends, Gabriella  
and Lucio.

Rosalind shakes each of their hands and they continue to stare at her as  
if in a trance.

ROSALIND

Your new work. I am so anxious to see it.

Rosalind turns first to "Luglio a Locarno". She studies it with a  
puzzled gaze.

ROSALIND

This is very beautiful, Stefano. It looks very  
much like an old painting of yours if I recall.

LUCIO

Yes, I was thinking that, also. It looks  
remarkably like an old painting of yours that I  
remember.

GABRIELLA

Oh, what do you remember? You're lucky if you  
remember to brush your teeth before you go to  
bed.

STEFANO

Oh, you shouldn't waste time on me. There are many wonderful artists here tonight - many much more talented than me.

ROSALIND

Don't be ridiculous. I grew up on your paintings. I told you that.

GABRIELLA

Move aside now, Stefano. Let her see the painting of... of...

LUCIO

Let her see the painting of the beautiful woman.  
(to Rosalind)  
Oh, you will love this new painting. It is all he has done for the last two months. All he can talk about.

If Stefano's eyes were armed with weapons, Lucio would be in a bloody pulp.

ROSALIND

Please, Stefano. I would love to see it.

Stefano stands firmly, his arms plastered against the canvas, like a man on the firing line.

STEFANO

I have just realized that it is not yet ready for show. There are some final touches it needs - the blue in the background, it is all wrong. I cannot allow you to see it in this unfinished state. It.....

Finally, Lucio simply pulls on his body with a strong tug around the waist, and Stefano peels from the painting, both men crashing to the floor. "The Woman in Blue" is unveiled in even more light and loving splendor than we had seen her before.

Gabriella looks back and forth between Rosalind and the painting a couple of times and then quietly starts with the Hail Marys again.

Rosalind stares breathlessly at the painting - its texture, colors, delicate detail - it is an amazing creation - but even more than that - with each of them bathed in this light - it is her - captured more candidly than any camera could reproduce. Her mouth drops a little as she sucks in the image before her - her.

ROSALIND

Stefano, it... it is amazing.

Stefano jumps to his feet. He makes a move to cover the painting with his body again, but realizes it is too late.

STEFANO

When I, uhh, as I look at her just in this light, I realize she might bear some resemblance to you. Isn't that strange?

ROSALIND

Yes. She does look a little bit like me.

LUCIO

(aside to Gabriella)

A little bit like her? She could be looking at a mirror and it wouldn't look that much like her.

ROSALIND

I have seen thousands of portraits and profiles, Stefano. But I have never seen one done like this. The way she's lit in all the darkness. It's amazing.

As Rosalind says this, she moves closer to the painting, her head passing just under the light above her, recreating the lighting from the painting. Behind her, Gabriella shakes a little and her Hail Marys become more frantic.

STEFANO

I am... thank you. I am happy you like it. As I was saying, the background...

ROSALIND

No, I love it. The background is like an endless sky.

LUCIO

(again aside to Gabriella)

An endless sky? Where do they see these things?

Gabriella slaps him across the shoulder.

ROSALIND

She is both strong and afraid. It is so full of emotion.

STEFANO

Oh, thank you. Thank you. It is an honor to me that you think so.

Stefano turns nervously to Gabriella and Lucio.

STEFANO

Rosalind is a professor here. At the university.

GABRIELLA

Oh, a professor. That's very good. Tell me, how do you know Stefano?

ROSALIND

Well, Stefano and I only met a couple of months ago. But I have been following his work for many, many years. I think he is one of this city's great artists.

LUCIO

You should tell that to some of the local galleries. For months we try to get them to

display his beautiful paintings and they won't do it.

Stefano motions violently for Lucio to stop.

ROSALIND  
Won't take your work?

STEFANO  
Oh, he is exaggerating. He has that problem when he starts speaking - he gets very carried away.

GABRIELLA  
Stefano, you should not be ashamed. They are the ones who should be ashamed. Look at this. This is more beautiful than anything in any of those galleries.

ROSALIND  
I'm sorry. I didn't realize. I just assumed that you had stopped painting for awhile.

Stefano shoots Lucio another mean look, but then, as he looks back to Rosalind, his expression melts to sadness.

STEFANO  
No, I have always been painting. I have just stopped selling for a long while.

There is a long silence. Stefano's face and shoulders slump. This is a subject of great shame for him.

STEFANO  
If you'll excuse me, I, uhh, need to use the bathroom.

Stefano hurries away from the three of them. Each is clearly discomfited by the haste of his departure.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - UNIVERSITY GALLERY - LATER

A larger restroom. Four stalls, four sinks. Stefano is at one of the sinks, cupping water to his face. Lucio enters, approaches him slowly.

LUCIO  
You know, beautiful as it is in here, do you think maybe we should go check out some of the artwork in the gallery?

STEFANO  
She remembered.

LUCIO  
She remembered what? What are you talking about?

STEFANO

She remembered when I was considered a great artist. She saw me as that. What I used to be. Now, she knows the truth.

LUCIO

What are you talking about? She told you to your face just ten minutes ago that she had never seen anything so beautiful as your new painting. Your **new** painting.

STEFANO

That was before she knew. Before she knew that I do not have it anymore.

LUCIO

Have it? Have-a what?

STEFANO

That magic. That magic to create beautiful things that grab hold of people inside. I used to grab hold of people inside.

LUCIO

Do you not listen to anything that anybody says? That painting grabbed hold of all of us inside. It looks just like her - and she loves it.

STEFANO

She only said that because she was embarrassed. She is pitying me.

LUCIO

You foolish man. You are pitying you.

STEFANO

She remembered when I was a great artist. You had to destroy all that!!

LUCIO

Nothing has been destroyed. You are a great artist. You are a great artist who is spending too much time in restrooms.

STEFANO

I cannot face her. I cannot face her again.

LUCIO

Stefano, there is a beautiful woman out there who thinks you are a genius. She is a lover of art. She does not care if you are selling your work.

STEFANO

I care. The man she thought she was meeting was a famous artist, not a failed artist.

Lucio backs away, moves to the door.

LUCIO

If you have failed, Stefano, it has nothing to do with your art.

With this, he exits.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY

Outside the restroom, Gabriella and Rosalind are waiting for Lucio. He comes out shaking his head.

LUCIO

He... he is not feeling well. I think he must be very nervous for the show.

Rosalind nods with a tinge of sadness. Lucio and Gabriella exchange a knowing look.

GABRIELLA

Oh, look. Somebody is bidding on his painting.

CUT TO:

STEFANO'S WOMAN IN BLUE

An older man is at the ballot box, scrawling something on a yellow piece of paper. He folds it twice and deposits it in the box. Next to him, his wife nods at the work pleasantly.

GABRIELLA

Oh, I hope somebody bids on his Italian village. His Italian villages are my favorites.

ROSALIND

Oh, mine as well. They're always so busy with people. You can just hear, and smell, and taste the city.

LUCIO

You say things so beautifully. I wish you could talk to him. All I can think to say is that his paintings are beautiful. "I can taste them and smell them." I will try that.

Lucio looks at a nearby painting and sniffs with his nose.

GABRIELLA

You know, Stefano, he is a very, very good man. Lucio and I have a son. He lives in New York now. But when he was little, we were both working all day every day. And Stefano would take care of him. Almost every day for three years, and Vincent would just sit and watch him paint. All that time with an artist, I guess that is why Vincent is trying to become an actor now. Mama mia.

Rosalind laughs at this.



ROSALIND

I remember Stefano from his shows. He always seemed so happy just to have all those people around.

GABRIELLA

Lotsa people. Like his villages. Life can be very lonely for a man who comes from a small village with familiar faces. But he blames this Moretto.

Confusion flushes Rosalind's face.

ROSALIND

Moretto? What do you mean?

GABRIELLA

This Moretto came and filled up all of the galleries. Stefano thinks Moretto caused the death of the artist in the city.

Rosalind looks dumbstruck by this. She opens her mouth to speak, but Stefano suddenly emerges from the restroom, wiping his brow with a handkerchief.

STEFANO

I am sorry. I am feeling a little better now. Perhaps something I ate...

GABRIELLA

Stefano, look at all the people crowded around your area. It is the most popular painting here.

CLOSE ON:

the painting. We pull back to reveal, indeed, a large group gathered in silent revelry.

LUCIO

Gabriella, why don't we go and look at some of the paintings on the other side of the room.

GABRIELLA

Si, si.

Gabriella waves her fingers to say goodbye to Stefano and Rosalind. She follows Lucio across the room.

STEFANO

Do you know many of the artists here?

ROSALIND

I was looking at the list. I know about half of them. A friend of mine, John Noland has a couple pieces there in the corner. Will you join me?

CLOSE ON:

Lucio and Gabriella at the other side of the room, watching the two walk together. They share a satisfied nod.

CUT TO:

LATER

The crowd has diminished. Lapels loosened, ties discarded. Some of the artists stand by their work and shake hands. Lucio and Gabriella are still present, pretending to look at paintings, but clearly catching peeks of Stefano and Rosalind engaged in light-hearted banter. Rosalind lets out a laugh and the two exchange knowing glances. Victor approaches Stefano and Rosalind near Stefano's paintings.

VICTOR

Stefano, I saw a great many bids dropped in your box. I'd say your Woman in Blue was the smash of the show.

STEFANO

I am glad the people liked it. It makes me feel good.

VICTOR

It's an amazing work. I'm gonna be going. I'll be in touch about the bids tomorrow, my friend. Rosalind, you look lovely. Good night.

Victor exchanges cheek ciaos with each. Lucio and Gabriella approach.

LUCIO

It is unfair, my friend. Unfair to all these other artists to be on display in the same room as you.

Stefano makes the Italian STOP motion - right hand to left wrist as he says it.

STEFANO

Shtop!!

GABRIELLA

Rosalind, it was adorable to meet you. We hope we will see you again soon.

ROSALIND

Very nice to meet you both.

LUCIO

And you remember, you know where to go for a nice cut of beef.

All four exchange cheek ciaos. As Lucio and Stefano embrace, Lucio lingers for a moment.

LUCIO

(whispering)

Perhaps I will not stop by in the morning. You know, in case you have a woman over.

They wave goodbye as they exit, leaving Rosalind and Stefano almost alone in the room.

ROSALIND  
Well, I should probably move on myself.

STEFANO  
Would you... uh, can I....?

ROSALIND  
Would you like to get some coffee?

STEFANO  
Yes, yes, uhh, now?

ROSALIND  
Yeah. How 'bout it? I know a great place.

Stefano clasps his hands together. This moment was made easier.

STEFANO  
Buonissimo.

EXT. LOMBARD CAFE - NIGHT

The cafe that Stefano had visited when tracking down Moretto. At night, the view of Lombard is even more beautiful. The cafe is crowded with people, both inside and out. Stefano and Rosalind ascend the steep street toward the cafe. Stefano looks around in disbelief, nervous.

ROSALIND  
The Lombard Cafe. Have you been here before?

STEFANO  
Ah, yes. Yes. One time.

ROSALIND  
Oh, looks like some people are leaving. Let's grab that table.

The two hurry and take a table outside, settle.

ROSALIND  
So, you were telling me about your childhood.  
Your village.

STEFANO  
Ah, si. My mother moved to New York when she was young. She stayed for many years. I was born in New York. We moved back to Italy shortly after I was born.

ROSALIND  
Back to Umbria.

STEFANO  
Si. It was just the two of us, but the people of my village took great care of both of us. It was like a big family.

ROSALIND

Why did you move back? Back here, I mean.

STEFANO

Everyone told me I was so lucky to be an American citizen. All the opportunity. So I flew back to California. And here I am.

Suddenly, an excited voice turns Stefano's head.

AMY

Stefano! How are you?

Amy is standing over their table now with a pencil and paper in hand.

STEFANO

Oh, uh, hello. I am good. How are you?

He looks to Rosalind, gulps, embarrassed.

AMY

I haven't seen you in weeks. So, did you ever find, uhh, Moretto?

STEFANO

No, no. I gave up on all that.

AMY

Oh, that's too bad. It seemed like fun. Detective work and all that. Well, what can I get you both?

STEFANO

A cappuccino, grazie.

AMY

(to Rosalind)

Eeeeeew. Don't you love that Italian accent? I love that.

ROSALIND

Indeed. I'll have the same.

AMY

Alright, be right back.

Amy scampers off. Stefano looks sheepishly back at Rosalind.

ROSALIND

You say you have only been here once?

STEFANO

Uhh, strange girl, very friendly.

Stefano shifts nervously in his chair.

STEFANO

So, your turn. Tell me about your childhood.

ROSALIND

Well, it kind of lacks the international flavor of your story. I was born in San Francisco. Raised here. Never saw much outside the walls of the city growing up. Except for the summer trips. Every summer my family would take a week and go up to Lake Almanor. Have you heard of it?

Recognition - Almanor, the name of the painting - floods Stefano's face. A quick flash of the painting on the screen. He recovers quickly.

STEFANO

Uh, no. No, I don't believe I have.

His wide eyes betray him, but Rosalind doesn't seem to notice.

ROSALIND

Just a little lake up north. Secluded and beautiful - so different than the city. Those are the weeks I'll never forget about childhood.

STEFANO

Almanor you say? It sounds familiar. Perhaps I have read of it somewhere.

Amy bustles from the cafe with a tray and sets down a cappuccino in front of each of them.

AMY

You know, Stefano, I haven't seen that guy, David in here in a long time. I thought maybe you got him.

STEFANO

No, no. I have not gotten anyone. Thank you for the coffee.

AMY

Uhhh, uhhh, prego. Your welcome.

Amy smiles and scoots off carelessly. Rosalind looks questioningly at Stefano, but he only shrugs.

ROSALIND

Well, that was childhood. But let me tell you something about my college years. I was this lost soul, looking for a future. My friends had all grown tiresome and materialistic. So, I sought refuge in art galleries. And there, I discovered your work. I had always loved art, but your work - that's what made me an art major.

STEFANO

And now an art professor. I am flattered. I have never heard anything so nice about my work.

ROSALIND

Oh, I spent enough time with Lucio and Gabriella tonight to know that's not true.

STEFANO

Yes. They are good friends.

Stefano smiles and Rosalind smiles sweetly back at him.

STEFANO

That woman in the painting - she was you.

Rosalind blushes, her eyes gleaming back at him.

ROSALIND

Stefano, I've never really done anything like this before, but...

STEFANO

Like what?

ROSALIND

Would you like to go home with me tonight?

STEFANO

Uhh, go-a home...with you?

ROSALIND

Would you like to spend the night ... with me?

STEFANO

I...ahhh... Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

A spacious flat of sophisticated design. Cherry-stained wood and splashes of black. Paintings on every side of the large walls. Bookshelves lined with books - an oblong black couch and a set of red chairs. A picture window in front looks down on the bay. A large staircase leads up. The front door clicks open, and Stefano follows Rosalind inside.

ROSALIND

This is home.

STEFANO

It.. it is a palace. It's so big.

ROSALIND

Well, I love art. I wanted as much wall space as possible.

Stefano wanders to the west wall. He looks at the two paintings. The first is of a vineyard - a long, sweeping view with two men walking side by side down a dusty trail.

ROSALIND

That was painted by my friend from tonight, John Noland. He is from the Napa Valley.

STEFANO

Ah, the Napa Valley. Are you a wine drinker?

Rosalind moves up next to Stefano, admiring the picture. Both are awkwardly looking out of the corner of their eye more at the other than at the painting.

ROSALIND

Yes, I enjoy wine. Napa wines, Chiantis, not so much the French wines, although--

But before she can finish her distracted response, Stefano seizes her face in his hands, stares at her for a second as he had the painting of her, and then kisses her, slowly at first, and then passionately.

The two kiss for a long beat and then, without breaking embrace, Rosalind begins leading him back toward the staircase. They move together, an awkward dance. As they finally approach the staircase, Rosalind takes a careful step up the first stair, but the momentum of the two causes them both to fall, Stefano just catching himself before he crushes her. They look at each other for a moment, making sure the other is alright, and then together return to the kiss.

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS - LATER

Stefano emerges from the bedroom in a woman's robe, much too tight for him. His hair is ruffled, his demeanor calm. He trods cautiously down a long hall past a closed door to the end, where he enters the bathroom. We hear water running, and seconds later he emerges, his face wet. He creeps back down the hall, this time pausing at the closed door. He slowly tries the handle, but it won't budge, locked. He stares for a beat at the door, then creeps silently back to the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSALIND'S BEDROOM - SUNRISE

A huge king-size bed with a giant oak headboard. A huge vanity mirror across from an antique bureau. Rosalind emerges from a huge walk-in closet dressed smartly in a blue suit. In the bed, Stefano is just coming awake.

ROSALIND

Good morning. I'm really sorry, but I volunteer every Sunday down at the Waterhouse, it's a shelter for under-privileged kids. There's coffee and eggs in the kitchen. Help yourself.

Stefano looks at her inquisitively. She turns away to slip her shoes on.

STEFANO

Charity work, huh? Very good, very good. I'm sorry to see you go.

She moves over to him and gives him a kiss on the lips.

ROSALIND

I know. Me too. Call me soon, OK?.

STEFANO

I want to see you tonight.

ROSALIND

Tonight? Tonight would be wonderful. I'll see you at 8 o'clock. Here.

STEFANO

Perfect.

She kisses him one more time and hurries out the door with a wave.

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - LATER

Showered and dressed, Stefano is seated on Rosalind's couch sipping a cup of coffee and reading the newspaper. He sets the paper down and turns around slowly, gazing up the stairs.

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS

Stefano ascends the stairs and the hallway light pops on. He moves straight to the closed door in the middle of the hall and grabs the handle. Again, it will not budge. He bends down and attempts to peer in the keyhole, but it affords no view. He shrugs and turns back toward the stairs.

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano strides out the front door. He turns back to lock the door and as he does, something above him catches his eye. His hand falls away from the door and he stares up in disbelief.

STEFANO'S POV

Through the branches of a lone poplar, and in the frame of a dark window, we can make out the yellow curtains that block out the sun.

Suddenly, the screen fills up with the flash of that painting "No Escape" - a woman's image, a crumbling doorway, three candles, a hairbrush, and those yellow curtains in the wind.

TANYA (V.O.)

Wow! You must be a big fan.

STEFANO (V.O.)

A big fan of art? Si. Yes, I am.

TANYA (V.O.)

No. No. I mean a big fan of Moretto.

Stefano rushes back inside the apartment...

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS



...and up the stairs. He stops at the locked door, pushes his hands against it. He looks around, perplexed. He runs back down the stairs.

#### DOWNSTAIRS

He runs to the bookshelves, lined with novels, folders, textbooks, and teaching packets. He quickly scans them with his hand, and stops on a packet of pages, which he pulls from the shelf. From the corner, he tears loose a large paperclip, and returns the packet to the shelf. He runs back

#### UPSTAIRS

where he hustles to the door and drops to his knees. He carefully unravels the paper clip until it looks more like a fish-hook. Carefully, he feeds the clip into the lock and jiggles it slightly. He presses his ear to the door, listening for the click, but instead, the clip rattles to the floor. He picks it up and carefully replaces it into the lock and jiggles it again, until it catches something. He stops and then swiftly turns the clip to the right. There is a loud CLICK. Stefano stands, pockets the clip and tries the door handle. It moves this time, and the door swings open.

#### INT. ROSALIND'S STUDIO

Stefano steps slowly into the room and gasps. It is identical to the room from the painting. A table with three candles set up before the window where those yellow curtains are closed. There is a large mirror just next to the window, and standing here in the doorway, Stefano sees not a woman's image, but his own. In the opposite corner of the room there are two easels with sheets draped over them. Stefano puts his hand to his chest, taking it all in. He moves almost mechanically, still in shock, to the covered easels. He begins slowly removing a paisley sheet, which reveals an incomplete painting with pine trees. He replaces the sheet and removes the other slowly. He gasps again at a completed work, this one a busy feast of activity as men and women with detailed bodies, but no faces, scurry across a crowded street.

#### CLOSE ON:

the lower right corner of the painting in which that unmistakable capital M is proudly brushed in red ink. Stefano only stares for a long moment, then suddenly--

ROSALIND (O.S.)

Stefano! Stefano, are you still here?

Frantically, Stefano throws the sheet back over the painting. He rushes toward the door, exits, and tries to slowly pull it shut. It inches shut, closer, closer, but then Rosalind's head appears coming up the stairs, and just as Stefano squeezes the door shut, Rosalind freezes in her tracks.

ROSALIND

What were you doing in there?

STEFANO

It just.. uh, nothing. I was merely curious--

ROSALIND  
(furious)  
Did you find out what you needed to know?

STEFANO  
I'm ... I'm sorry, Rosalind. I don't know what I was thinking. I just saw those yellow curtains....

ROSALIND  
Why did I trust you? I think I've been idealizing you in my mind for fourteen years. To come back here under this pretense... I feel sick.

STEFANO  
No. Rosalind, I had no intention.

ROSALIND  
Goddammit, why didn't I listen? That waitress even said you were playing detective. So, now what? You going to expose me? What's your game?

STEFANO  
No, it's not a game. I just got too curious. I'm not trying to....

ROSALIND  
Get the hell out of my house.

STEFANO  
No, Rosalind, please. It is not like....

ROSALIND  
GET THE HELL OUT OF MY HOUSE!!

A little frightened by this, Stefano backs slowly down the stairs.

ROSALIND  
I want to know one last thing, Stefano DiPresso. Was this about blackmail? Because I'll tell you right now -- no matter whom you threaten to tell, I won't pay a cent.

Rosalind descends the stairs after him, backing him slowly toward the front door.

STEFANO  
No, I do not want your money. I am not going to expose you. I swear. I wasn't trying to hurt you. My curiosity... I just--

ROSALIND  
Get out - now!

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

Stefano steps outside and then turns quickly to say something, but the door slams in his face.

INT. LUCIO AND GABRIELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucio and Gabriella are seated, poised with excitement, like expectant fathers. Stefano is at the end of their dining table, sipping coffee. His entire body reaks of rejection, but Lucio and Gabriella don't seem to notice.

GABRIELLA

So, tell us, come on, tell us. Did you take her home with you?

STEFANO

No, I did not take her home with me.

LUCIO

That is alright. It is too quick, too quick.

STEFANO

She took me home with her.

Both gasp at this, exchange a glance, nod, and smile.

LUCIO

She took-a you home?

STEFANO

Yes. But now she will no longer speak to me.

Both attentive faces change from smiles to scowls at this. The two think about it a moment, then

GABRIELLA

Will not speak to you? Oh, Stefano, did you explain to her that it has been a long, long time?

STEFANO

No, no. I did a horrible thing.

LUCIO

It happens, but Gabriella's right. You must explain to her that you are out of practice. A man can only go so long before--

STEFANO

That part was fine! I broke into her studio.

LUCIO AND GABRIELLA

What!?

STEFANO

She is Moretto. I found out this morning.

LUCIO

Moretto? What do you mean she is Moretto?

STEFANO

She is the artist I was looking for. I did not even suspect until last night at the coffee

shop. But now she thinks I was only interested in finding her out.

GABRIELLA

She is the one you wanted to kill?

STEFANO

(dejected)

No, I didn't want to kill her. I wanted to kill Moretto when I thought... I don't remember what I thought.

LUCIO

So, this terrible artist is Rosalind?

STEFANO

Moretto is not terrible. When I finally opened my eyes to his, er, her paintings, I realized that. Moretto is amazing - she is amazing. But now she will not believe me. She thinks I am out to get her.

GABRIELLA

Stefano, go to her. She cannot think you are out to get her. The woman I saw last night was crazy about you. It sounds like you were stupid. Go to her and tell her you were stupid. Women like men who can admit that they are stupid.

LUCIO

I am not stupid!!

GABRIELLA

We are not talking about you, stupid! Go to her, Stefano.

STEFANO

She is a dream. She lights me up inside. My curiosity got the better of me. When I paint villages, and fields, and girls lately, I did not feel them. But when I was painting her, I could feel it everywhere inside--

LUCIO

(hopeful this will work)

That painting of her - I could taste it and smell it.

STEFANO

What are you talking about?

GABRIELLA

There is something wrong with you!!

(pause - to Stefano)

Go to her! Go to her!

INT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY - DAY

Victor and a few others are cleaning up from the previous night's activities. Stefano appears in the glass-windowed door. Victor shoots to the door and hurriedly motions for Stefano to enter. He does so.

VICTOR

I have been trying to call you all day.

Victor motions for Stefano to follow him away from the others. They head over to the section where Stefano's paintings still hang. Victor holds up a folded yellow piece of paper.

VICTOR

Stefano, this bid was in the box for your Woman in Blue last night. Look at it.

Victor hands the paper to Stefano. We can only see his face as he unfolds it. His eyes go wide. His jaw drops.

STEFANO

Is this for real?

VICTOR

I called the man who gave this bid. His name is Carsten Tait. He owns a private collection in Sausalito. He also wants to get in touch with you to commission you to do another piece.

Victor moves to him and gives him a huge hug. Stefano only stands, staring at the paper, dumbfounded.

VICTOR

You are back, my friend. You are back.

STEFANO

I can't believe it. I can't believe he bid this much.

Both men stare at the painting in question.

VICTOR

I guess he absolutely had to have it.

STEFANO

I know how he feels.

VICTOR

You and Rosalind seemed to be getting on well last night, eh? She is a wonderful woman.

STEFANO

(sadly)  
Yes, she is.

VICTOR

What's wrong, Stefano?

STEFANO

I did something stupid, Victor. Something so stupid.

VICTOR  
You did something to Rosalind?

Stefano takes a step back and looks again at his painting.

STEFANO  
Yes.

VICTOR  
Oh, Stefano. I know you too well. I'm sure you  
didn't do anything so bad.

Stefano stares again at the painting. His face is pained, indolent.  
Victor eyes him quizzically.

VICTOR  
The ultimate artist, you are. Even in your  
moment of triumph, you have found some tragedy  
to torture you.

Stefano breaks from his trance with fire in his eyes.

STEFANO  
I am going to her, Victor. I will call you later  
about the paintings.

Stefano is almost running out of the gallery.

VICTOR  
She is in class right now. Hamacher Hall.

STEFANO  
Yes. Yes.

Stefano bangs through the door and just keeps going. Victor stands,  
confused for a moment, and then resumes collecting glasses and napkins.

INT. HAMMACHER HALL CLASSROOM

A class of about thirty students is taking notes as Rosalind lectures.  
She is not a strict podium lecturer, using the full length of the floor  
at the front of the classroom, her passion for the subject clear in her  
many powerful gestures.

ROSALIND  
We have discussed the effect of the women's movement on  
art. The art world experienced sweeping changes as women  
began to publicly express themselves as freely as their male  
counterparts. But why did this anger some female artists?

An eager student in the middle of the classroom puts her hand in the  
air. At the same time, a door in the back of the classroom opens, and  
Stefano walks in quietly, awkwardly, clearly uncomfortable with the  
inevitable attention one draws by entering a class in mid-lecture. He

takes a seat in back as discreetly as possible. Rosalind watches him for a moment, which draws more attention his way. After a beat, she points toward the raised hand.

ROSALIND

Kimberly.

KIMBERLY

There were some female artists who weren't painting for political reasons.

ROSALIND

Good. James, for these artists, without political motivation, what were some of these frustrations?

She points at a nose-ringed student, JAMES, who doesn't look like he was volunteering this answer.

JAMES

Uhh, I guess some of the women artists just wanted to be accepted as artists.

ROSALIND

Exactly. There were and still are a number of artists, feminists, who didn't always want their work included in exhibits designated as female, or feminist. Being thought of as great "female" artists was seen as merely a form of segregation to these women who believed that equality is not achieved through segregation but through integration.

Rosalind pauses in her explanation, clearly sizing up Stefano in the back of the classroom as she does. Stefano shifts in his seat uncomfortably.

ROSALIND

It is not always easy to have attention called to you. Most artists adore drawing attention to their art far more than drawing attention to themselves. Art, at its greatest, comes from a place of exquisite invention, the exhausting of the mind and soul to reach a half-conscious state of inspiration and potential that in a normal self-conscious state one would never dream oneself capable. When an artist has created something they feel truly proud of, when they have captured a piece of themselves and framed it for the world to behold, and that piece expresses EVERYTHING they are and EVERYTHING they see - it is not fair to say merely 'this expresses her female point of view' or 'this piece expresses what it means to be an aging old man.'

James shoots his hand up this time. Rosalind continues to regard Stefano.

ROSALIND

Yes, James.

JAMES

I was with you there 'til the aging old man part. Where does that come in?

ROSALIND

Yes, I'm sorry if that was confusing everybody. I meant only to say that there are frustrations for every artist regarding public perception of their work. I'm sure there are men who struggle as mightily as women to have their work recognized and appreciated. And most likely only an artist can truly appreciate what a scary, vulnerable thing it is to send a piece of your soul out into the world.

Rosalind pauses, and claps her hands together, still staring at Stefano. The class seems a little confused.

ROSALIND

I'm sorry, everybody, but I have to cut class a little short today. Please have Chapter 16 read by Wednesday. Bye.

With that Rosalind grabs her bag, and hustles toward the side door of the classroom. Stefano rises and starts down the stairs, but with the class exiting toward back, he is swimming against the school. By the time he reaches the lecture floor, Rosalind has exited hastily.

INT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY

Victor is still tidying the space, taking a duster to one of the sculptures. There comes a loud KNOCKING at the door. Through the window we can see a reporter, MANNY MARTINEZ, and a crew of three toting a camera and microphone. One of Victor's colleagues opens the door, and the headstrong Manny bursts in the room. He is 30ish, a bundle of energy and ego.

MANNY

Is this where, uh... uh...

Manny snaps his fingers and a college-aged INTERN flips quickly through a notepad.

INTERN

Stefano DiPresso.

MANNY

...where Stefano DiPresso had a show last night?

Victor approaches Manny slowly.

VICTOR

It wasn't really **his** show, but he did have some work on display. How can I help you?



MANNY  
Just point me to his paintings.

VICTOR  
Follow me.

Manny and his entire crew follow Victor over to Stefano's section. Manny waves his arm and they begin setting up the camera, pointed directly at the Woman in Blue.

VICTOR  
What is this all about?

MANNY  
We're doing a little story on this DiPresso. You know him?

VICTOR  
Yeah, I know him well. What kind of a story are you doing?

Behind them, the crew is getting a shot of each of Stefano's paintings.

MANNY  
You know him well? You a good friend?

VICTOR  
Yes, I'm a good friend. I've known him for years.

Manny snaps quickly and loudly to the camera crew.

MANNY  
Over here. Over here.

The crew turns quickly and points the camera at Victor.

MANNY  
I want you to tell me everything you can about the man that calls himself Stefano DiPresso.

We see Victor now in the cameraman's point of view through a black and white newscamera.

VICTOR  
Calls himself? He is an artist. A very talented artist--

Suddenly, a phone rings loudly. Manny motions to shut off the camera. Manny flips open a pocket cell phone and the crew relaxes. Victor stares in confusion.

MANNY  
(into phone)  
Hello? Yeah. He's not at home? Damn. Well, I don't.... actually, just a sec.  
(to Victor)  
Do you know where DiPresso is? Do you know who he is with?

VICTOR  
I... what is this about? Is this about his work?

MANNY  
(motioning frantically)  
Yes, it is. This is really important, man. Come on, do you know?

Taken off guard, confused, Victor nods slowly.

MANNY  
(into phone)  
Don't worry. We know where to find him.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY

Manny and his crew tear away from the building. Their large white van is parked just across the street. They cross toward the van just as another van with 7 scrawled across the body pulls up at the curb. Manny moves to the other van before climbing in his own. Another crew emerges. He bangs the hood.

MANNY  
You're late, boys. Too late.

INT. UNIVERSITY GALLERY

Through the window across the street, Victor is watching all this. As Manny pulls away, the other crew comes running toward Victor. He shivers and runs his hands nervously through his hair.

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano is speeding down the sidewalk toward her apartment, an urgency in his stride. He is clutching a large bouquet of daffodils. He strides to Rosalind's door, clutches his chest, closes his eyes, mocks one of Gabriella's Signs of the Cross, and knocks. After several beats, the door opens.

ROSALIND  
What are you doing here?

STEFANO  
These are for you.

He hands her the bouquet. She takes it, sighs.

ROSALIND  
Stefano, I trusted you. You violated me.

STEFANO  
I came to tell you that I am sorry. I had no right breaking into your studio. But you misunderstood my intentions. I am amazed that you are Moretto. I think you are the most talented woman - the most talented person I have ever met.

ROSALIND

That didn't give you the right to--

STEFANO

You sketched Nocturne of the Soul from the cafe you took me to last night. It is an abstract representation of Lombard at night - twisted and eerie as a distrustful soul. You painted August in Almanor, a glorious painting of two lonely boats based on the memory of your summer trips as a young girl. Those two boats... you see them in your dreams, and you no longer know if they are a piece of your real childhood memories, or an invention of your adult mind trying to recreate dead days. You painted No Escape in that very studio that I so stupidly broke into. It is about the isolation you sometimes feel as an artist who does not let anyone know that she is an artist. It is about feeling trapped into being somebody whom you are and you are not.

ROSALIND

How do you know all this?

STEFANO

You know my work. Well, I know yours, too. Only I didn't know it was yours until now. And we are both moved by something in each other's work, because each of our paintings cries out for the same thing. All I knew about Moretto was that Moretto was talented and lonely. I'm tired of being lonely, Rosalind.

ROSALIND

Come on in, OK?

Stefano moves strongly through the front door. His awkwardness is gone, his nervousness swallowed.

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

Stefano enters behind her and both take a seat on the couch.

ROSALIND

When I came home and found you up there, something in me just snapped. Life is just so stressful trying to keep a big secret from everyone I know.

STEFANO

I am not here to betray your secret. I just want to say I am sorry. And I want to know why.

ROSALIND

Why what?

STEFANO

Why are you this Moretto? Why can you not just be Rosalind?

Rosalind takes a deep breath, collecting herself.

ROSALIND

When I started painting, everything I did was rejected. At first, I thought I just had no talent. I stopped believing in myself. I had to paint, but I was scared to death of constant rejection. So, I devised this alter-ego that I could hide behind. I thought it wouldn't be so humiliating if Moretto got rejected.

STEFANO

So, why did you call yourself Moretto?

ROSALIND

I thought Moretto was a gender-neutral name. But it turned out it wasn't really gender-neutral. Everybody assumed it was a man. Suddenly I was painting and selling, and painting and selling, and painting and selling, until the spotlight on Moretto was this huge blinding light. I had always planned to reveal myself, but I know myself. I wouldn't shine in that spotlight, I would probably melt.

STEFANO

But the spotlight you have created... it's there because you are so marvelous, because you don't need Moretto.

ROSALIND

I'm not Moretto. And yet I am. Moretto is nothing. And yet it's everything. The scary thing is, when I step into my studio, I really am Moretto. I don't know if I could even paint as Rosalind Molitore anymore.

STEFANO

There is no Moretto. There is only Rosalind Molitore. If Moretto is driving you mad, it is time for the death of Moretto.

ROSALIND

It's a crazy situation, you know? As Moretto, I can get anything I paint in a gallery like that.  
(she snaps her fingers)  
As myself, I could take the same paintings around town, and never get a second look.

STEFANO

That is not true. Your work is alive and vibrant. You paint from somewhere inside and people can sense that. Moretto is a gimmick. I used to think that's all it was. But now I can see that you don't need a gimmick.

ROSALIND

Maybe I do.

Stefano moves to her, takes her face in his hands again.

STEFANO

No, you don't.

He kisses her tenderly. She falls into him.

ROSALIND

I live in fear. I'm afraid that if I abandon Moretto, I will be nothing. I have two charities that depend on me for that money. But I'm also forever afraid that somebody is going to find out about Moretto, because I don't want a life like that.

STEFANO

A life like what?

ROSALIND

The life of a celebrity. My life is quiet, my students, my artwork, my charities, my friends. That's all I want.

STEFANO

You can trust me, Rosalind.

He kisses her again, and she kisses him back. After several seconds, there is the sound of tires SCREECHING, car doors SLAMMING outside. Rosalind leaps from the couch and peeks through the blinds. Out front, five different news vans have pulled to the curb. One even parks in the street. Car horns BLARE. Hordes of reporters and crews pour from the vans and dart toward Rosalind's house. She furiously shuts the blinds.

ROSALIND

You bastard.

She makes a mad dash for the stairs. Stefano cracks the blinds, stunned.

ROSALIND

You bastard!

She is already up the stairs, and he scrambles after her.

STEFANO

Rosalind, wait. It was not me. I promise.

INT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS

The door to her studio is ajar as Stefano enters the hall. He hurries through it.

INT. ROSALIND'S STUDIO

Rosalind has removed both paintings from the easels. She throws open a carrying case and places both inside.

STEFANO

Rosalind, listen to me.

ROSALIND

How could you? To come over and say all those things. You were just waiting for the cavalry to arrive, weren't you?

Rosalind grabs a huge padlock. She zips the carrying case shut and then secures it with the padlock.

STEFANO  
Rosalind, no. I did not do this. I would not do this to you. You must believe me.

ROSALIND  
I can tell you right now - I'm going to deny it. Nobody can link me to those paintings. The artwork is untraceable and so are the profits.

STEFANO  
I am not trying to expose you. I do not know what is going on.

ROSALIND  
Get the hell away from me.

She pushes past him and grabs her art supplies, brushes, a palette. She grabs a bag from the closet and deposits everything inside. Stefano moves to the window with yellow curtains. He peers out at the growing melee. More vans and cars, honking horns. Seven cameramen set up side by side across the street. Suddenly, the phone rings. Rosalind stomps out of the room.

INT. ROSALIND'S BEDROOM

She grabs the phone.

ROSALIND  
(into phone)  
Leave me alone!!!

She hangs it up and pulls it out of the wall. Stefano creeps into the room.

ROSALIND  
Are you happy?

STEFANO  
No. This... it is terrible.

ROSALIND  
Get out of here. And go tell your buddies to go home, because I'm not coming out.

Stefano backs up, moves to the back door of the bedroom. It contains two large windows that look out on a large balcony. On the street below, the chaos continues. Stefano crouches against the wall, so as not to be seen. Suddenly, his eyes go wide, his face contorts.

STEFANO'S POV

of the street below. Between the busy buzz of reporters and technicians, we see two men - Tom Lee and Philip from the bar. They are talking to a reporter.

Stefano's knees go limp, he puts his hands to his face.

STEFANO

Oh, my God. I don't think they are here for you.

ROSALIND

Oh, no, of course. They probably just want to get a shot of my apartment. That's the crew of Trading Spaces, right?

STEFANO

No. It is a misunderstanding. They are here for me.

The sound of knocking at the front door can still be heard.

ROSALIND

Yes, I understand that. They're here so you can say - hey, look who I found.

STEFANO

Rosalind, it is not like that. They don't know anything.

ROSALIND

Get out of my house!

STEFANO

No, no. (pausing) I will prove it to you.

Stefano stomps toward the balcony door.

ROSALIND

What are you doing?

STEFANO

I'm-a going out there.

ROSALIND

What are you going to say?

STEFANO

I'm going to tell them the truth.

ROSALIND

STOP!! Please! Haven't you done enough?

Stefano looks at her pleadingly, then turns the handle and steps out onto the

EXT. ROSALIND'S BALCONY - DAY

As Stefano emerges, a huge buzz comes up from the crowd, the pop of cameras fills the air. Instantly, video cameras are turned up at him,

standing above a sea of about two hundred people now gathered on the street, the sidewalk, the lawn.

PHILIP  
(pointing, yelling)  
That's him! That's him!

Immediately, people begin shouting, yelling, everybody trying to ask a different question at a higher volume than the person next to them. Stefano only stares out despondently at the chorus of chaos. He waves his arms, but the rumble continues. He raises his hands out in front of him and violently gives them the Italian STOP signal.

STEFANO  
SHTOP! SHTOP!!!

Down below, all cameras are trained on Stefano.

CUT TO:

POV CAMERAMAN

Stefano appears slapping his right hand against his left wrist. A melodramatic NEWSCASTER is doing a voice-over as the action unfolds. A photo of Tom and Philip appears in the corner of the screen.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
It seems these two men, Tom Lee and Philip  
Svenson have uncovered one of this city's great  
mysteries. Moretto's real name again: Stefano  
DiPresso.

The camera is still fixed on Stefano. As we pull back from this TV image, we find ourselves

INT. LUCIO AND GABRIELLA'S HOUSE

Gabriella and Lucio are both staring in amazement at the TV screen where Stefano is still motioning with STOPS!

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
This then, is a recording of the audio tape  
procured by our very own Amelia Anthony. Let's  
listen.

And so begins a crackly, edited recording of Stefano's conversation with Philip and Tom. So also begins another frantic set of Gabriella's Hail Marys.

STEFANO (V.O.)  
My name is DiPresso. Stefano DiPresso.

STEFANO (V.O.)  
I was... I was just having a game.

STEFANO (V.O.)  
You're going to tell them I am Moretto? Yeah. I  
understand. You two are sure clever. I didn't  
think I'd ever be found out, but I give you



credit. I'll be back here with your million dollars, OK?

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
Startling, as you can clearly hear. And now Stefano DiPresso is being confronted with this information for the first time. In case you're just tuning in - the enigmatic artist Moretto has been revealed. And we're there live!

LUCIO  
Oh my God!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROSALIND'S BALCONY - SAME

Finally, Stefano nearly explodes.

STEFANO  
SHTOP!!!!

The noisy mob quiets to a faint buzz.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
Well, he certainly has the temperament of an artist. We can clearly see that. Even from here inside the studio.

STEFANO  
If you have a question for me - one person can ask a question - one person!!

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
And that Italian accent you can clearly hear. Perhaps that's what tipped off Mr. Lee and Mr. Svenson. But clearly it's all speculation at this point.

Stefano searches through the crowd below - he spots a young woman, BEV MACKEY, in a red sweater with pad and pencil in hand. He points to her.

STEFANO  
You! In the red. Ask me your question.

BEV MACKEY  
(shouting up to him)  
Uhh, what first inspired you to take on the identity of Moretto?

Stefano stares down at the mob like a disappointed father. He takes a long, contemplative breath.

STEFANO  
I'm-a gonna say this once. If you choose not to believe me, it is because you are stupid. I am not Moretto. I tried for a long time to learn who Moretto is, but I got no closer than you. I wish, I only wish that I could stand up here and

claim all those wonderful paintings as my own. But I cannot. Two men came to me and told me they thought I was Moretto - so I humored them. Apparently, you all fell for the joke, too. If you want, I will show you my bank statement. I am about to be evicted from my apartment because I cannot sell a painting. I cannot pay my rent. I wanted to learn who this Moretto was, because just like you, I was jealous. Just like you, I was jealous that I could not have Moretto's celebrity, so I wanted to spite him his privacy. Look at you all.

(pause)

A great man once told me that if you want to learn about the artist you have to look inside the art. Until just a few minutes ago, I did not understand why Moretto was in hiding. But now I do. This is ridiculous. You people are so concerned with the artist, you are forever missing the art. Wherever this Moretto is, I pray to God you people don't find him. It would make-a me sick to think that a pack of wolves with pens and cameras got in the way of something truly beautiful. You want to learn more about Moretto? Then get up off the street, go to one of the galleries downtown, and open up your heart. Until you do that, you will never find Moretto.

INT. LUCIO AND GABRIELLA'S HOUSE

Gabriella is nodding approvingly. Lucio softly raises a fist in the air.

GABRIELLA

**That's** the man that used to paint those beautiful villages in Italy.

BACK TO:

STEFANO

He looks out at the crowd. They stare back at him silently for a long moment.

INT. ROSALIND'S BEDROOM

Rosalind is standing with her back to the wall just beside the balcony door. Her face is streaked with relief, confusion. She steals a peek at Stefano on the balcony.

STEFANO

STEFANO

I have nothing more to say.

The mob below begins buzzing again, throwing out crazed questions.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Well, we have heard an impassioned denial. Some might speculate that we have heard an impassioned lie.

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

In the swarm of bodies, vehicles, and equipment, Manny cries out.

MANNY  
We just got a call, man! That audio tape was doctored!

RANDOM REPORTER  
We just found out he's telling the truth. He's got nothing! No assets. Nothing!

Another short, STOCKY MAN jumps up on the hood of his car with a cell phone pressed to his ear.

STOCKY MAN  
HEY! There's a fire down in the Castro!

An eruption of activity! Cameras disarmed, reporters scrambling to cars, crews invading vans. Horns honk, obscenities screamed, as each vehicle jockeys for position on the way to the new destination.

EXT. ROSALIND'S BALCONY

As the mob disbands, Rosalind steps out onto the porch. Stefano does not notice her at first, still in a bit of a haze. She sidles up next to him and he quickly turns to her.

STEFANO  
(trying to explain)  
You see.....

Rosalind holds a single finger up to his lips to quiet him.

ROSALIND  
Shhhhhh!

Rosalind holds his face in her hands.

ROSALIND  
I'm sorry. Just promise me this will be the last bit of excitement for awhile OK?

She kisses his forehead, his eyelids, his cheeks.

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

One lone crew remains, one cameraman with his lens still fixed on the balcony. Stefano and Rosalind kiss.

INT. LUCIO AND GABRIELLA'S HOUSE

They are still watching the activity with huge smiles.

LUCIO  
It looks like he has found Moretto.

GABRIELLA  
It looks like he has found amore.

EXT. ROSALIND'S APARTMENT

Manny tugs on the sleeve of his CAMERAMAN to cut. When he doesn't, Manny jumps in front of the camera.

MANNY  
And so, the mystery of Moretto continues here. Despite the original reports, we have learned that Stefano DiPresso is, indeed, not the elusive artist. Live from the Marina District, I'm Manny Martinez. Join us for details at 11.

The cameraman lowers his camera in frustration.

CAMERAMAN  
Dammit, Manny. We still had a good human interest story there.

MANNY  
Human interest story! Nobody cares. Come on, let's get to the Castro.

INT. ROSALIND'S BEDROOM

Rosalind and Stefano slip back inside and shut the doors to the balcony. Stefano grabs her hands in his.

STEFANO  
I am sorry I brought this.. craziness. I thought that I had lost my genius, that if I could only be as clever at finding Moretto as I'd once been in my art, that my genius, my spark would return. And, and, I was right. But that spark wasn't about genius. It was about feeling something - feeling something that you make me feel.

ROSALIND  
Everything you said out there meant so much to me. I feel like I've known you for so long, Stefano. And I think I have. Everything that I learned about you from your art, now I know it's true.

He grabs her and kisses her and they fall back on the bed.

INT. BARTELLI LIVING ROOM

Lucio and Gabriella are still glued to the set.

CLOSE ON:

the TV. A newscaster, SONDRA SMITH, is at her desk. She has long, blond hair, rosy cheeks, and absent eyes.

SONDRA SMITH

Returning now to local news... actually, we are going to return to the Marina District where our own Manny Martinez has another live update. Manny...

The TV cuts to Manny Martinez, still standing in front of Rosalind's house.

MANNY

Once again, I'm Manny Martinez. Although it is now presumed that Stefano DiPresso is not the enigmatic Moretto, a strange new piece of evidence has been unearthed. Despite DiPresso's claims that he is a poor artist who is not able to sell his work, it has been confirmed that one of DiPresso's pieces sold at a silent auction last night for a six-figure pricetag. This bizarre saga continues.

Lucio and Gabriella's eyes both go wide. They grab each other's hands on the couch, mouths agape.

GABRIELLA

Six-a figures?

Gabriella counts out the six on her fingers.

GABRIELLA

Six?

Lucio nods to display his similar disbelief at this news. He emits a loud whistle.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stefano enters the apartment, whistling. He tosses his jacket over a chair, flips through the mail. He stops, his eyes frozen for a second. He scowls.

STEFANO

Levante!

On the sofa, a groggy Lucio springs awake.

LUCIO

Stefano, ah. I come looking for you - I thought I would wait. Must have nodded off.

STEFANO

You're checking up on me.

Lucio checks his watch.

LUCIO

It's 11:30 in the morning. You're coming home at 11:30 in the morning. I don't need to check up on you. I can figure things out. I saw you on TV.

Lucio smiles knowingly at Stefano.

STEFANO  
I must go take care of something with the landlady. I'll be right back.

LUCIO  
I'll ... I'll come along.

STEFANO  
What are you talking about? It's down the hall.

LUCIO  
I'll come.

Stefano shakes his head in confusion, rolls his eyes, shrugs.

INT. STEFANO'S HALLWAY

Stefano and Lucio stroll down the corridor, Stefano with a new confidence in his step. They stop at the same door Lucio had approached earlier. Stefano knocks and Mrs. Stenberg appears.

MRS. STENBERG  
I'm glad you came by. I saw you on the news. I take it you're good for the rent now.

STEFANO  
I'm good for it. Yes. Here you are.

Stefano scrolls his signature on a check and hands it to Mrs. Stenberg.

MRS. STENBERG  
Thank you. It's nice to have a celebrity in the building.

Lucio steps in front of Stefano, winks at Mrs. Stenberg.

LUCIO  
My name is Lucio.

Lucio extends his hand. Mrs. Stenberg hesitates, then grabs something from a drawer just next to her, and slips it discreetly into Lucio's palm as she shakes it. Stefano has already started away down the hall, uninterested in Lucio's antics.

STEFANO  
Ciao, Mrs. Stenberg.

Lucio folds up the item we now see to be a check and sticks it in his pocket.

LUCIO

(in a whisper)  
I told you he was good for it. You did not need this.

MRS. STENBERG  
Without that check, he would have been evicted last week.

LUCIO  
Well, I have a feeling you will not have to worry about late rent again.

Mrs. Stenberg shrugs and shuts the door behind her.

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT

Lucio enters as Stefano is packing clothing into a suitcase.

LUCIO  
Where are you going?

STEFANO  
Rosalind and I... we are going to get away from all the madness for a few days.

LUCIO  
Already taking vacations together! Where are you going?

EXT. LAKE ALMANOR - DAY

On a large green lawn, overlooking the quiet, crystal lake sit Stefano and Rosalind. Rosalind has an easel propped up, upon which she is painting the shimmering lake, and the cottages in the distance. Pine trees and dirt trails dot the landscape behind the two. Stefano sits sketching as well.

CLOSE ON:

the sketch, which is a profile of Rosalind against the backdrop of the trees and the water. Stefano sets his sketch down and edges closer to Rosalind. He peers over her shoulder at the portrait.

STEFANO  
Bellissimo. Come on. It is time.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

Both Stefano and Rosalind are down on hands and knees in the dirt and leaves just feet from the water. This is an isolated spot, the only sign of life the cabins in the distance. Rosalind is setting a crudely fashioned headstone made out of wood into the ground. As the camera rotates, we can see the large "M" that has been carved into the front. Stefano lays down a bouquet of daffodils on the ground in front of the headstone. Both rise to their feet and pay their respects. Stefano takes Rosalind in his arms.

STEFANO  
Do you have anything you want to say?

ROSALIND

Uhh, let's see. Moretto, you have been a blessing to me. I will never forget you. I hope you can understand that I need to try to make it on my own now. I've relied on you for many years, but now I think I found someone else I can rely on.

She squeezes Stefano's arm and both laugh a little.

ROSALIND

Alright, your turn.

STEFANO

Okay. Uhhh, Moretto,... I tried for a long time to find you. And I'm glad I did. You have taught me more than you could ever know. When times were especially bad, I thought that I wanted to kill you. Now that I have, I hope that you can forgive me. (pause) Sleep well.

The two wrap up in one another's arms, stare serenely out at the quiet lake.

INSERT:

ONE YEAR LATER

INT. STEFANO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Boxes are stacked against the wall. Stefano is sweeping in the kitchen. Lucio enters with a stack of mail.

LUCIO

Oh, you are almost ready to go.

STEFANO

Rosalind will be here soon with the moving van.

LUCIO

I am happy for you. Moving in with a woman. Gabriella and I, we didn't know for a while, you know what I mean?

STEFANO

I don't ever know what you mean.

LUCIO

I saw the mailman on my way up. LOOK!

Lucio pulls out a new copy of San Francisco magazine. It is very similar to the cover from the first scene, with a big red question mark stretched across a blue background. In black letters is written WHAT HAPPENED TO MORETTO?

LUCIO

It is a powerful feeling isn't it? To know the greatest secret in the city.



STEFANO

Shush. It is too much power for somebody like you.

LUCIO

Oh, for somebody like me, huh? Look at you, big famous artist now. I come by to help you and this is the thanks I get?

STEFANO

You're right. I'm sorry. You're a good friend. Good friend. I am just very nervous. Moving out. Our big show this weekend, you know.

LUCIO

Yes, your big show. Gabriella wants to know...

Suddenly, Gabriella appears in the doorway.

GABRIELLA

Gabriella wants to know if you have painted any of the villages from Italy. Those are my favorites.

STEFANO

Ciao, Gabriella. There will not be any Italian villages in the show. (pause) But I did paint one that I call San Gimignano.

Stefano pulls out a portrait from behind the pile of boxes. It is a green, brown, and blue festival of light and activity, with townsfolk, dogs, and children busy in the small streets, and three towers poking into the autumn sky. He offers it to Gabriella.

STEFANO

Nobody at the show could appreciate this the way you can. It is for you.

GABRIELLA

It is beautiful, Stefano. I'm glad to see you are remembering your Italian villages again.

Stefano picks up the magazine that Lucio had brought in.

STEFANO

I am remembering a lot of things.

Rosalind appears and knocks softly on the already open door. She has cut her hair and looks exquisite even in moving clothes.

ROSALIND

Wow, you really have packed everything up. Hi Gabriella, Lucio.

LUCIO

Rosalind, you remember - it is not too late. We can still unpack these boxes - keep him here. I'm very worried that you haven't thought about this.

GABRIELLA

You stop. We should pack you up to give me some peace and quiet.

ROSALIND

Well, if he gives me any trouble, I'll know where to send him, right?

GABRIELLA

Oh, he gives you any trouble, you send him over to me. And don't cook for him all the time - make him cook.

ROSALIND

Oh, he'll do some cooking. You can count on that.

Gabriella nods approvingly.

STEFANO

HEY! I'm right here in the room, huh?

LUCIO

Come on, I'll help you with these boxes. (pause)  
Now, Rosalind, are you sure?

ROSALIND

Yeah, I'm sure. I'm sure.

Rosalind and Gabriella share a long smile as Lucio and Stefano bend down for boxes.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEMAN GALLERY - NIGHT

A huge crowd of people lined up outside the building where spotlights shine on a sign that reads - "The works of Rosalind Molitore and Stefano DiPresso, October 12 - 25." The street is abuzz with well-dressed patrons and reporters. Manny Martinez is even there in tails with his crew. Stefano and Rosalind come walking from around the corner hand-in-hand and all attention goes their way. Manny signals to his cameraman to start shooting the two and he does. Both stop in their tracks, clearly surprised by this huge reception. Manny rushes to them with mike in hand.

MANNY

Mr. DiPresso, some critics have labeled tonight the "opening of the year". Do you think that the misunderstanding with Moretto last year has anything to do with this tremendous response?

STEFANO

Oh, I definitely think that the Moretto misunderstanding did a lot to change my life. But more than that I think that if the art is alive, the people notice.

MANNY

Ms. Molitore, this sudden fame that has been sprung upon you, how are you handling it?

Manny thrusts his mike in Rosalind's face.

ROSALIND

It used to be that I didn't think I could handle it. But now I'm just glad that it's strictly for my artwork. It's an amazing feeling. It's certainly nice to be appreciated.

Stefano wraps an arm around her.

MANNY

Now, one more question. This relationship that you have.... where...

But Stefano and Rosalind have already moved away from Manny and the camera, and toward the entrance, where the doorman allows them passage. Manny, he pushes away. Lucio approaches Manny from the crowd.

LUCIO

I know him. I can tell you what you need to know.

MANNY

Alright, let's see. Uhh, what is Stefano DiPresso **really** like?

Lucio is really playing for the camera.

LUCIO

Everything he is about on the canvas, he is about inside. Every color he uses represents a different emotion, all trapped inside one little space. He paints beautiful little cities that tell you everything you could ever want to know about love, and family, and friends. He paints desolate landscapes with sunny backgrounds to remind us that loneliness is everywhere but it is not forever. He paints beautiful women to remind us what the only true works of art really are--

Finally, Manny cuts him off with the wave of a hand.

MANNY

Cut. CUT! We can't use that garbage.

Manny and his crew move quickly away from Lucio. Gabriella, in her finest, stomps up behind Lucio, smacks him on the back of the head.

GABRIELLA

What did you think, you were giving a national address?

Lucio and Gabriella follow the huge stream of people toward the doors to the gallery. Manny has set up just behind them.

MANNY

And so, this is Manny Martinez, signing off here at the "show of the year". Although Moretto has disappeared from the art world, hot new names like Rosalind Molitore and Stefano DiPresso have stepped neatly into Moretto's shoes. Again, I'm Manny Martinez. I'll see you at eleven.

We pull slowly back from the action to see the huge line of people that still snakes around the building. Manny packs up, Lucio and Gabriella squeeze through the door, and the lights continue to radiate the two names, side by side, on the sign held high above the building.

FADE OUT

END CREDITS